Stalls and Tabernacle Work

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FRANCIS BOND

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WOOD CARVINGS IN ENGLISH CHURCHES

Beverley Minster

WOOD CARVINGS IN ENGLISH CHURCHES

I.—STALLS AND TABERNACLE WORK

II.—BISHOPS' THRONES AND CHANCEL CHAIRS

BY

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PREFACE

THE subject dealt with in this volume, so far as the writer knows, is virgin soil; no book has appeared, here or abroad, on the subject of stallwork. Abroad, the great mass of stallwork has perished; sometimes at the hands of pious vandals, often through neglect, more often still through indifference to or active dislike of mediæval art. In the stallwork of Belgium not a single tabernacled canopy remains; in France and Italy the great majority of the Gothic stalls have been replaced by woodwork of the Classical design that was dear to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; only in Spain can the wealth and splendour of English stallwork be rivalled. In England a great amount of magnificent stallwork still remains; on the stallwork indeed and the concomitant screens time and labour and money were lavished without stint in the last two centuries of Gothic art. Hitherto, however, this important department of English mediæval design has almost wholly lacked recognition and appreciation; attention had not been called to its value in the study of artistic woodwork, and even the most splendid examples of this branch of English art have been passed over with uncomprehending indifference. Yet it is no overstatement to say that there is nothing in this country more consummate in design or execution than the stallwork of Lancaster, Chester, Ripon, and Manchester. To most of the readers of this volume the illustrations which have been here gathered together will come as a revelation of beauty and interest. It is to be hoped that the book will help to inform those who are heritors of a great artistic past, will make them proud of their heritage as Englishmen, and faithful to preserve it and hand it on in turn unimpaired to their successors. The art is in the main English

art, as English as the timber in which it is wrought, and deserves the attention of all English-speaking people the world over, who inherit equally with ourselves the good things that remain from the England of old.

This book, like the others in the series, owes much of any value it may possess to the generous and ready co-operation of many lovers of mediæval art. For photographs and drawings the writer is indebted to the Rev. G. B. Atkinson, Mr A. W. Anderson, A.R.I.B.A., Mr J. H. Bayley, Mr C. E. S. Beloe, Dr G. G. Buckley, Dr Oscar Clark, Mr F. H. Crossley, Rev. E. Hermitage Day, Mr W. Marriott Dodson, Mr G. C. Druce, Mr A. Gardner, Mr S. Gardner, Mr G. F. Gillham, Mr C. Goulding, Mr Charles de Gruchy, Mr F. J. Hall, Mr J. F. Hamilton, Mr P. Mainwaring Johnston, F.S.A., Professor Lethaby, Mr W. Maitland, Mr Hugh M'Lachlan, A.R.I.B.A., Mr C. F. Nunneley. Mr H. Plowman, Rev. G. H. Poole, Mr Alan Potter, Miss E. K. Prideaux, Rev. G. W. Saunders, Mr S. Smith, Mr J. C. Stenning, Mr F. R. Taylor, Mr G. H. Tyndall, Mr G. H. Widdows, A.R.I.B.A., Rev. W. E. Wigfall, Mr A. J. Wilson, Mr E. W. M. Wonnacott, F.S.I. The writer is indebted to the Society of Antiquaries and to the Wiltshire Archæological Society for the use of original drawings.

The revision of the proofs has kindly been undertaken by Rev. R. A. Davis and Rev. C. A. Norris; to the former and to the Rev. A. Bayley the writer is indebted for many valuable suggestions with respect to changes of orientation and the arrangements of chancels. The illustrations are reproduced by the Grout Engraving Company. The text is preceded by a bibliography and lists of measured drawings, and is followed by an index to places and illustrations and a subject index.

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CONTENTS

PART I

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	Design, Construction, and Cost of Stalls	1
II.	Position, Number, and Arrangement of Stalls	16
III.	Canopied Stalls	29
IV.	Tabernacled Stalls	51
V.	Renaissance Stallwork	75
VI.	Stalls in Parish Churches	85

PART II

VII.	Bishops' Thrones	101
VIII.	Chairs in Chancels	111

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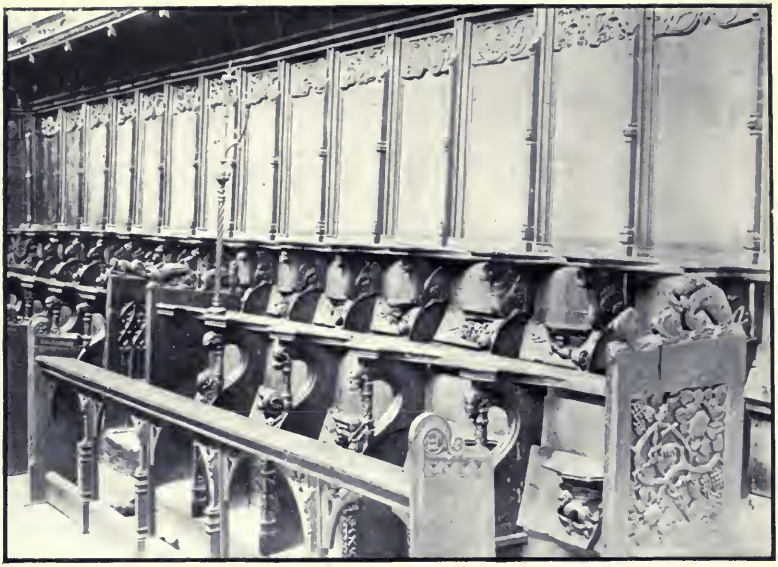
STALLS AND TABERNACLE WORK IN ENGLISH CHURCHES

PART I

CHAPTER I

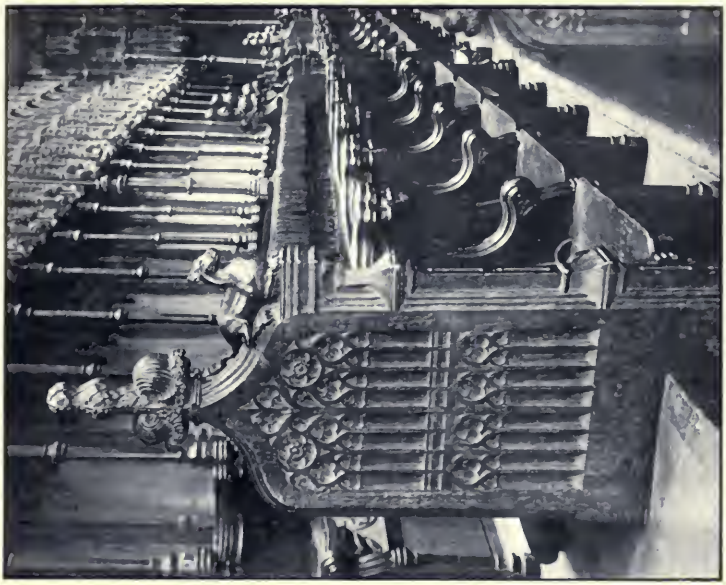
STALLS IN CHURCHES OF MONKS AND CANONS

In all churches of monks and canons, whether secular canons or canons following the Augustinian, Premonstratensian, Gilbertine or other Rule, stalls were placed in the choir. These stalls were occupied either by the monks or by the canons and their deputies and by men singers and choristers; there was also a limited lay use. The stalls had seats; these, however, were occupied for but short portions of a service: during the greater part of each service the occupants of the stalls stood or knelt. The seats turned up on a pivot, as may be seen by comparing those of Beverley St Mary (2) with those of Christchurch (2); and when they were turned up, a small ledge underneath the seat gave a little support to any one standing in the stall; for his comfort also there was usually a circular projecting ledge behind him, against which he could lean his back; *e.g.*, at Beverley St Mary, but not at Balsham (3); also he could rest his hands on the shoulders of the stall, when standing, as at Beverley St Mary and Balsham. An elbow was often provided lower down, for use when he was seated; as in the two above-mentioned churches. Above was usually some form of canopy, varying from a cornice of slight projection, as at Balsham, to such tabernacled spires as those of Beverley Minster (27). In front of the stalls, except sometimes the front stall occupied by choir boys, was a desk for service books. Every part of the stallwork was carefully designed; and parochial, collegiate and monastic stalls alike were constantly growing in importance and loveliness up to the Dissolution.

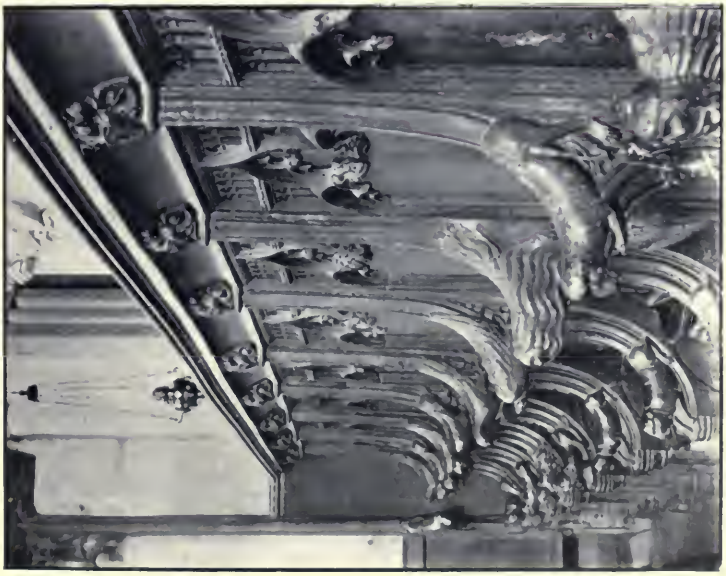


Christchurch

Beverley St Mary's



Beverley Minster



Balsham

St Luke St Matthew

St John St Mark

Christ Church, Newgate Street

The upper shoulder was usually simply molded, as at Beverley St Mary; it rarely took the form of an animal, as at Balsham. Usually the lower elbow was simply molded, as in Beverley Minster (3); sometimes it terminated in a mask, an animal or foliage; as in the lower range of stalls at Christchurch (2) and at Cartmel (80); in Beverley St Mary there is an angel in front of each of the lower elbows. As a rule, the projecting ends of the elbows were carried down as supports, *e.g.*, at Beverley Minster; sometimes, however, a shaft or pair of shafts is introduced, as at Balsham, Beverley St Mary, Hereford All Saints (44); Dunblane (67) and Christchurch (2), where they are highly enriched. The upper part of the back of the stall is usually panelled; *e.g.*, Winchester (35), Chichester (36), Hereford All Saints (44), Balsham (3). In the sixteenth century, however, panelling became less common; at Dunblane the stall backs are plain (67); at Cartmel they are filled in with scrolls and fretwork (80); at King's College, Cambridge, with coats of arms (78); at Christchurch with carvings of masks and animals (76). In Wren's church at Christ Church, Newgate Street, the panels of the stalls have fine carvings of St Matthew (4), St Mark (4), St Luke (4), St John (4), the Last Supper and other subjects. The desks also usually have traceried panelling in front and at their ends, which is often of much importance in helping to fix the date of the stalls; *e.g.*, at Chester (24), Manchester (6), Trunch (85) and Stowlangtoft (91). At Lincoln the panels of the lowest rows of desks contain alternately the figures of a king and of an angel with a musical instrument (5). On the stall ends was lavished the best artistic talent of the day; there are magnificent examples at Chester (9), Ripon (8) and Beverley Minster (7); very fine also are those in Bishop Tunstall's chapel in Durham castle. On the example from Manchester is an impaled shield, displaying on the dexter half the letters I. B. (*i.e.*, John Beswick, donor

Lincoln

Manchester

of the northern stalls), a cross intervening, and beneath on a chevron seven nails or cloves. The sinister half is occupied by a demi-virgin issuing out of an orle of clouds. The illustrations from Ripon shew the stalls of the Archbishop of York and the Mayor of the city (8). In the former the poppy head takes the form of an elephant holding a man in his trunk, and carrying a castle filled with soldiery; in front of the elephant is a centaur (renewed); below is a large mitre studded with precious stones (*mitra preciosa*) above a shield charged with the three stars of St Wilfrid, the patron saint of the Minster, and supported by two angels, between whom is a scroll with the date 1494. Attached to the latter is a collared baboon; beneath is a shield charged with the arms of the see of York, two keys in saltire. Of the two examples illustrated from Chester (10), one represents the Annunciation; the other is a most elaborate Jesse Tree (9).

The ends of the desks usually terminate in poppy heads; at

Chester, Ripon, Manchester and Beverley there are magnificent examples. At Blythburgh, Suffolk (11), is a foliated poppy head with a lion in front; in front of the desks and those on the opposite side of the chancel are niches containing statuettes of the apostles; these stalls were brought into the chancel from the Hopton chapel, which is said to have been founded in 1452; the Hopton arms appear on the bench end. There are interesting desks in the great church of Walpole St Peter, Norfolk (12). When Edmund the King of the East Saxons was shot to death by the Danes and afterwards beheaded, his head was guarded by a wolf; the scene is depicted here and up and down all East Anglia; the whole story is told in six foliated capitals in the north porch of Wells cathedral, which is early in the thirteenth century. At Stowlangtoft, Suffolk, the poppy head consists of a vested priest reading at a lectern or altar (91).

Beverley Minster

Besides stalls for monks, clergy and singers, benches or

stalls are sometimes found for members of a church gild, as at Fressingfield, Suffolk ; or those now used by almsmen at Etwall, Derbyshire, on which the date 1635 is inscribed ; the Jacobean armchair motif is prominent ; nevertheless there is Gothic

Ripon

Ripon

cusping at the back ; pegs are thoughtfully provided for the almsmen's hats (13).

The stalls are generally constructed very solidly. The ends of a row are inserted in a strong sill, into which the standards for the supports of the book board are also inserted. The

Chester

elbows are in one solid piece and are framed into the backs of the stalls; they are further secured by the heavy capping above, which admirably connects and strengthens the work. On either side the elbow is sunk to enable the seat to be turned up on its hinges and to afford it support when down. The seats are generally about an inch in thickness, the misericords projecting about five inches. As the entire seat is got out of one solid piece of wood, the time expended on each must have been very considerable; and difficulties in the grain without doubt frequently added immensely to the labour. The work is often cut across the grain and worked with much skill. Great care was taken in some instances to match the wood; *e.g.*, in the panelled backs of the stalls in Henry the Seventh's chapel.*

Chester

The construction of the tabernacled canopies is well seen in the set of illustrations from Chester cathedral. In Lincoln Minster, where they are of somewhat simpler type, they may be described as follows. The canopies are hexagonal, supported on shafts, which have clustered niches above their proper capitals; the stalls of the Chancellor and Treasurer, which are at the extreme east on either side of the choir, have winged seraphs in their capitals. The niches have ogee canopies bowing forward in front of their true gables, with various small heads and faces on the hip-knobs. A second story of the canopy contains a niche, square in plan, but set lozenge wise, covered with a lofty pinnacle, and flanked by open screenwork with high flying buttresses, nearly all of which have lost their crockets. All the niches originally contained statues. The loss of these greatly damaged the general effect—the alternation of light and shadow, the play of line and the added mass. Now that the statues have been replaced, the general character intended to be impressed on the design can be well realised (52).†

* Harry Sirr in *Art Journal*, 1883, 329.

† Wickenden, *Archæological Journal*, 1881, pp. 43-61.

The cost of woodwork so elaborate as that of the later stalls, especially those with tabernacled canopies, was very great. At Wells the stalls, destroyed in 1848—another example of "restoration"—were begun in 1325; each resident canon paid 30 *solidi* for his own stall, and the stalls were to cost altogether £1,200. The non-resident canons, having subscribed little or nothing, were ordered in 1337 to make up a deficit of £200 for the completion of the stalls.* As the number of stalls needed at Wells

Blythburgh

would be about sixty, it follows that the expenditure on each stall was to be £20, which in our money might be £300; giving a grand total of about £18,000. The stalls at Amiens number 116, and were put up between 1508 and 1522. Viollet-le-Duc computes that in 1866 they could not have been put up for less than £20,000.† But they do not possess tabernacled spirelets,

* Canon Church in *Archæologia*, lv. 326.
† *Dictionnaire raisonné*, viii. 464.

having a comparatively simple horizontal cresting. At Windsor in 1483 six canopies cost £40; thus sixty would cost £400, or in our money about £4,800; *i.e.*, about £80 each; but this expenditure relates to the canopies only, and not to the stalls or the misericords, or the lower stalls and desks; if the cost of these be added, the cost might be as great as at Wells. Few probably realise the vast expenditure which our forefathers gladly undertook not only on the building but the equipment of their churches: in a church of the first rank, such as Exeter cathedral, the cost of the altar, reredos, sedilia, bishop's throne, canopied stalls and

Walpole St Peter's

pavement would hardly fall short of £30,000 of our money; which is exclusive of the cost of the masonry, vault, timber roof and leading, and stained glass.

As regards the arrangement of the stalls, as many as there were room for were placed at the back of the choir screen, usually two or three on either side of the western doorway of the choir. The juxtaposition of screen and stalls gives some very beautiful effects, *e.g.*, at Chaddesden, Derbyshire (99); still more so is this the case when screen and stalls are of the same design, as at Chester (24), where the screen was designed in accordance with the stallwork by Sir Gilbert Scott.

As to the *place of honour* in the stalls, that raises some interesting points. There were no less than three places of honour in a chancel; in each case the place of honour was to the right, because it was written in the Psalms, "Sit thou on my *right hand*"; and because of the words of the Creed, "sitteth on the *right hand* of God the Father Almighty"; first, the right hand or north side of the altar, facing the west; second, the first seat to the right, or on the south side, of the entrance to the chancel through the choir doorway; thirdly, the extreme right to the east, or nearest the altar, of the south row of stalls. In the sanctuary the Lord Christ was conceived to be in real, corporeal presence, face to face with His people, His right hand to the north, His left hand to the south. In the sanctuary therefore the place of honour was on the north; and to this day when a bishop visits a parish church, his chair is placed north of the altar; the gospel also is read on the north side, the epistle on the south. In several churches in Derbyshire there are stone "gospel-desks" affixed to the north wall of the chancel. Turning to the choir, things are different. When the procession enters the choir from the nave through the screen doorway, the right of the return stalls is the place of honour. Here in a cathedral of the old foundation, *i.e.*, one which has always been served by secular canons, such as Lincoln, Wells, Hereford, the dean sits on the right, and the subdean or the precentor on the left of the gangway. In a monastic church the abbot sat on the south, the prior on the north side. But sometimes a monastic church, *e.g.*, Ely, Winchester, Norwich, was also the cathedral of a bishop, who was *ipso facto* abbot. In such a church the bishop should sit on the right-hand side of the return stall; at Ely there is no bishop's throne, and he occupies that position to this day. Where a bishop's throne was erected, it was placed on the south

Etwall

Beverley Minster

Beverley Minster

side of the choir, which is ecclesiastically always favoured more than the north. Of the stalls on the south side of a choir the one most to the right is of course the easternmost; and it is here that the ancient thrones remain of the bishops of Exeter, St David's and Durham. Again, even if it was not a cathedral church, there were occasions when it was not convenient for an abbot to be so remote from the altar as the return stalls, *e.g.*, at certain portions of the Mass; for such occasions alternative seats were provided for the abbot and prior; the former occupying the easternmost stall on the south side, the prior that on the north. At Peterborough there is evidence that the abbot's seat was on the south, at the east end of the choir, near the *ostium presbyterii*.* At Ripon the bishop occupies the easternmost stall in the south side, which from the carving of a mitre at the back appears to have been originally assigned to the Archbishop of York; the place of honour opposite is occupied by the Wakeman or Mayor of the city.

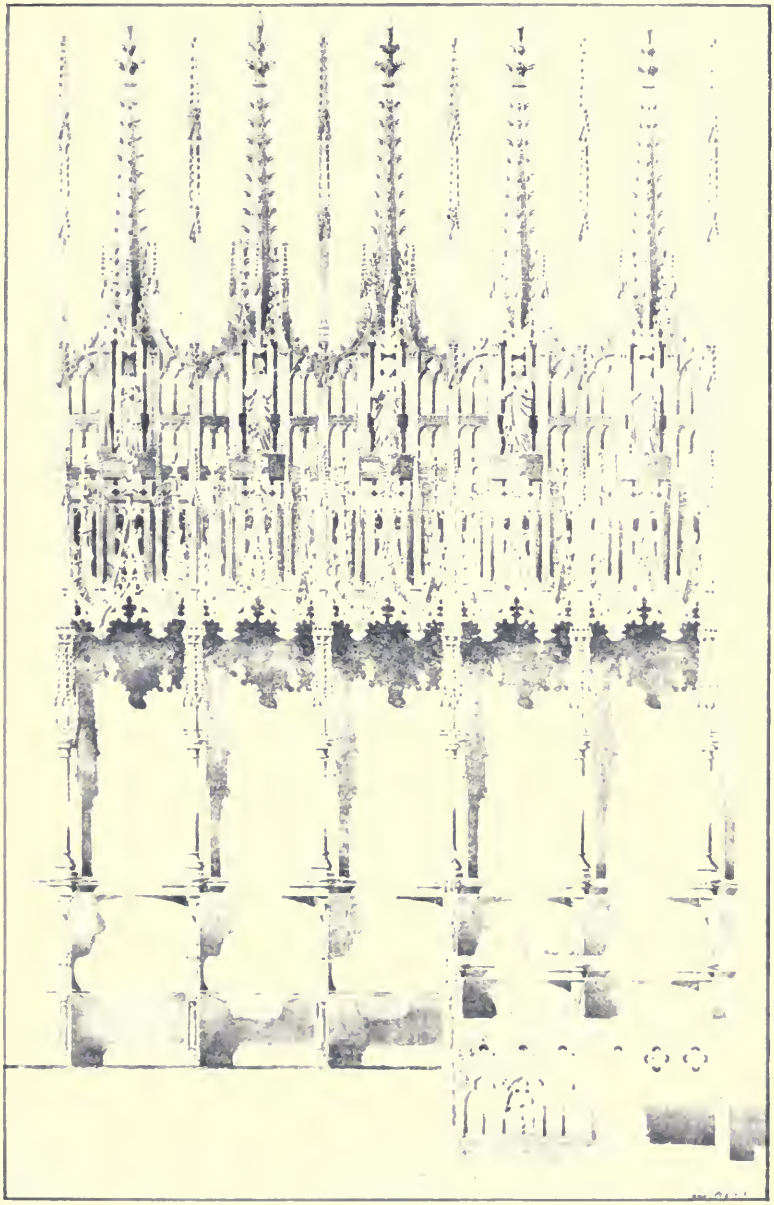
* C. R. Peers in *Victoria County History of Northants*, ii. 445.

CHAPTER II

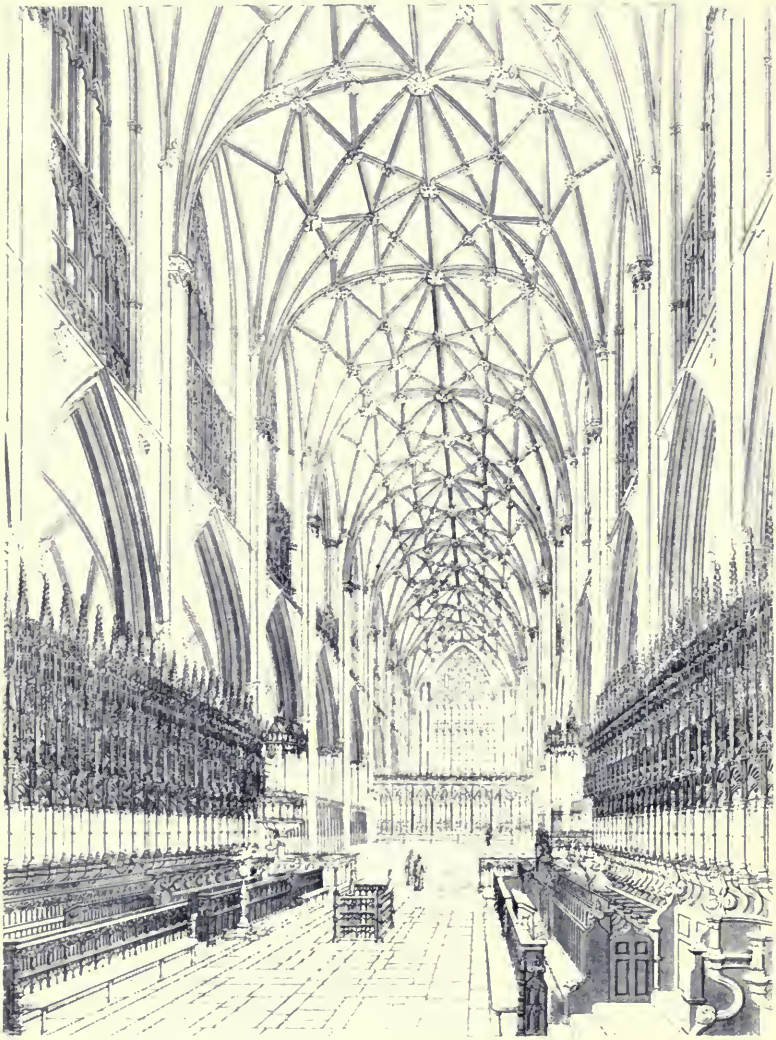
POSITION, NUMBER AND ARRANGEMENT OF STALLS

THE history of the changes of position of the stalls of the clergy is one of the most curious and least understood episodes in ecclesiology; it may be worth while therefore to go into it somewhat at length, and to begin at the beginning. As regards what was at all times the main service in the church, the Mass, there were two conditions which it was desirable to bear in mind in church planning. One was that the celebrant should face to the East; the other that the congregation should face to the East. In the earliest Christian days the latter was most often disregarded. The earliest arrangement, normally, of a Christian church was that the sanctuary, containing the altar, should be to the west, and that the laity should be in the nave occupying the eastern portion of the church. At this time the western portion of the church consisted of a semicircular apse. This apse had a double function. On the chord of it was placed the High altar (in the earliest days it was the only altar); and to the west of it stood the celebrant facing east and facing the congregation, as he does to this day at St Ambrogio, Milan, and other churches which retain this primitive plan. Behind the altar, ranged round the apse, were the seats of the clergy, having in the centre the throne of the bishop. Thus the apse, like the chancel of an English parish church, had a double function; the portion containing the altar was the sanctuary, the portion containing the seats of the bishop and his presbyters was the choir; basilicas so orientated were divided into nave, sanctuary, choir; whereas English parish churches divide into nave, choir, sanctuary. Many examples of basilicas with eastern nave and western choir still survive in Rome, Dalmatia, and Istria. To this day in Milan cathedral and St Mark's, Venice, the stalls of the clergy and singers are placed on either side of and at the back of the high altar; the apse, with infinite loss to the dignity of the services, being made to serve both as sanctuary and choir.

There is, however, an alternative plan, which may have been



Lincoln



York Minster

in use from the first simultaneously with the other. At any rate it can be but little later, for in 386 was begun the important church of St Paul *extra muros* at Rome, with apse to the east and nave to the west. By this alteration, if no further change had been made, the congregation would face eastward, but the celebrant and the bishop with his presbyters westward. Strangely enough, this curious arrangement was actually adopted at least once in England. In the walling of the semicircle of the cathedral apse at Norwich there still remains the bishop's throne and portions of the seats of his clergy. And since Norwich cathedral is not orientated to the west, but to the east, it follows that the people faced east and the bishop and clergy west; it is hardly conceivable, however, that the celebrant can have faced west. Such a disposition can never have been but rare. A new arrangement was made; in the first place the celebrant was made to face eastward, with his back to the congregation, thus permanently obscuring their view of the altar and of many portions of the office; in spite of its obvious and great disadvantages this position has been retained in the vast majority of Western churches ever since. There remained the question of the seating of the bishop and presbyters. The remedy adopted was to transfer them from the apse to the nave; the result being that they sat to the west instead of to the east of the altar. In this second position for some considerable time the seats of the clergy remained. At S. Clemente, S. Maria in Cosmedin,* and other basilican churches in Rome, the seats of the clergy still remain in the eastern bays of the nave, separated off, however, all round by low marble screens, which, at S. Clemente, are mainly those of the sixth century church.

Great was the revolution wrought in church planning by the determination that the laity, clergy, and celebrant should all alike face East. To the Catholic believer nothing was of more mystic import than the orientation of the church. He prayed toward the East, toward the Holy Land where his Lord lived and died and was buried; he looked forward to the dawn of that day when He should come from the East to judge the quick and dead.

> "Our life lies eastward; every day
> Some little of that mystic way
> By trembling feet is trod:
> In thoughtful fast and quiet feast
> Our heart goes travelling to the East
> To the incarnate God:

* Illustrated in the writer's *Screens and Galleries*, 2.

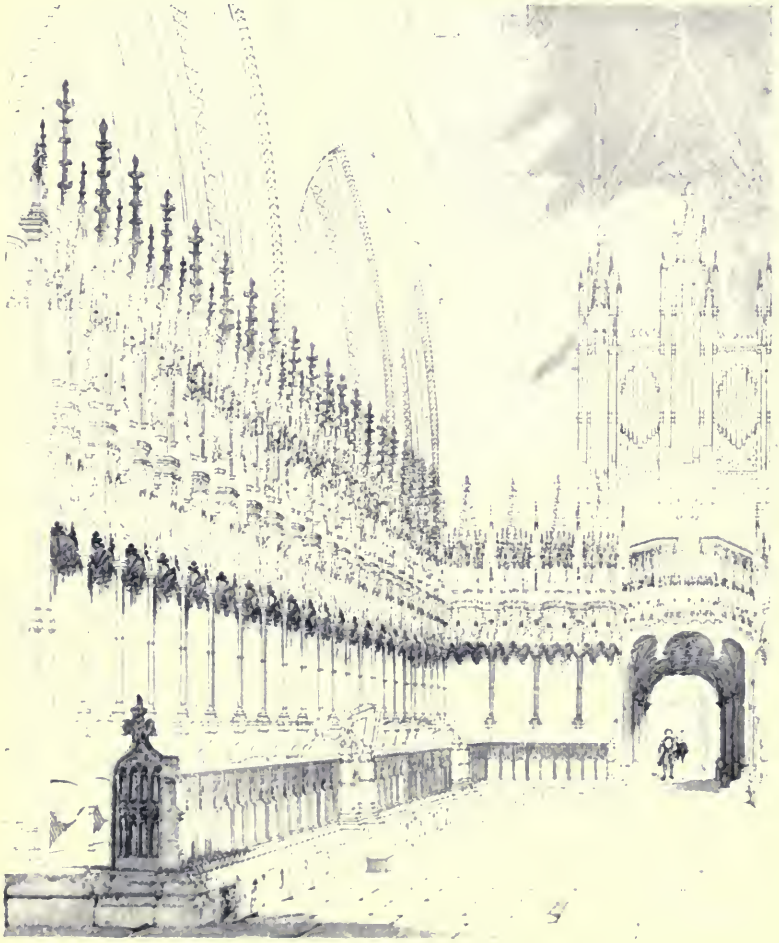
Still doth it eastward turn in prayer
And rear its saving altar there ;
Still doth it eastward turn in creed,
While faith in awe each gracious deed
Of her dear Saviour's love doth plead ;
Still doth it turn at every line
To the fair East, in sweet mute sign
That through our weary strife and pain
We crave our Eden back again."*

The next step appears first in ninth century churches, and in the plan of the monastery of St Gall. It involved no change in the position of the stalls of the clergy ; but instead of being placed in the eastern bays of the nave, the sanctuary was lengthened to contain them. And so we reach the familiar parochial chancel, with its western portion forming a choir, and its eastern a sanctuary. The clergy left the nave and the laity in the midst of whom they had so long sung and prayed, and removed to the chancel, where to the north and south were solid walls, while to the west, no doubt very shortly, was added a screen guarding the entrance to the chapel. Though the new plan made no alteration in the relative position of the stalls of the clergy, it was nevertheless a real revolution. The chancel became practically a secluded, closed chapel ; the offices and services which had been performed in the midst of the laity became more and more the prerogative of a privileged ecclesiastical order ; in the end, in the greater churches, special altars were put up for the laity in the nave ; except in the parish churches, laymen lost the right to participate in services at the High Altar.

In our great monastic and collegiate churches it was long before the ninth century innovation—viz., the insertion of the choir in the eastern limb of the church—was generally adopted ; in some it was never adopted at all. The typical Cistercian churches, *e.g.*, Kirkstall, reverted to the Early Christian arrangement, by which the eastern division of the church was appropriated exclusively to the sanctuary ; and this was the case with many Benedictine and collegiate churches also. Till ignorant and incompetent "restorers" were let loose on them, the eastern limb of the cathedrals of the Secular Canons of Wells and Hereford, that of the Benedictine cathedral of Ely and others formed one vast sanctuary, the stalls being placed under the central tower and in the eastern part of the nave ; at Wells the choir had a length of 47 feet, but the sanctuary of 67 feet. The reason why a sanctuary so long was required was no doubt that

* Faber's *Poems*, pp. 227-229.

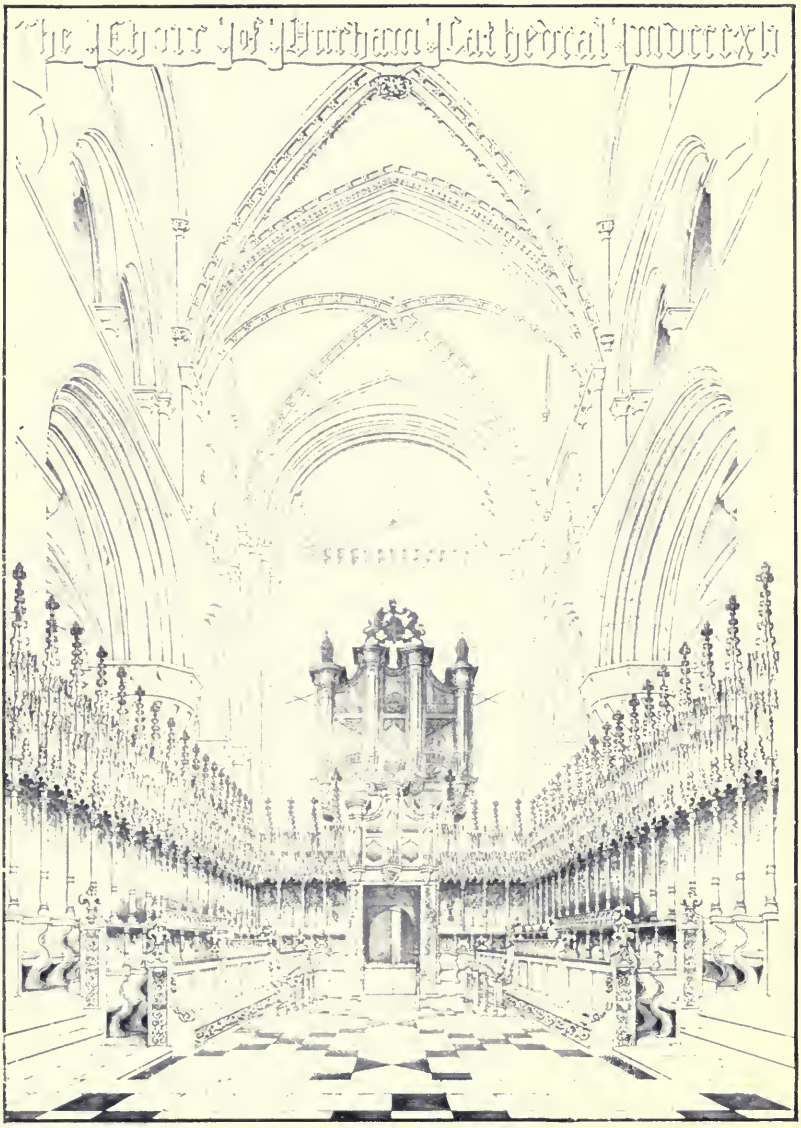
it was desired to place in it two altars; one, the "choir" or "matins" altar, for ordinary services; the other, the High altar, more to the east, reserved for High Mass.* In some cases, *e.g.*,



Carlisle

at Westminster, in many Cistercian churches, and in Spanish cathedrals, the stalls were not placed under the central tower,

* See the writer's *Westminster Abbey*, 48.

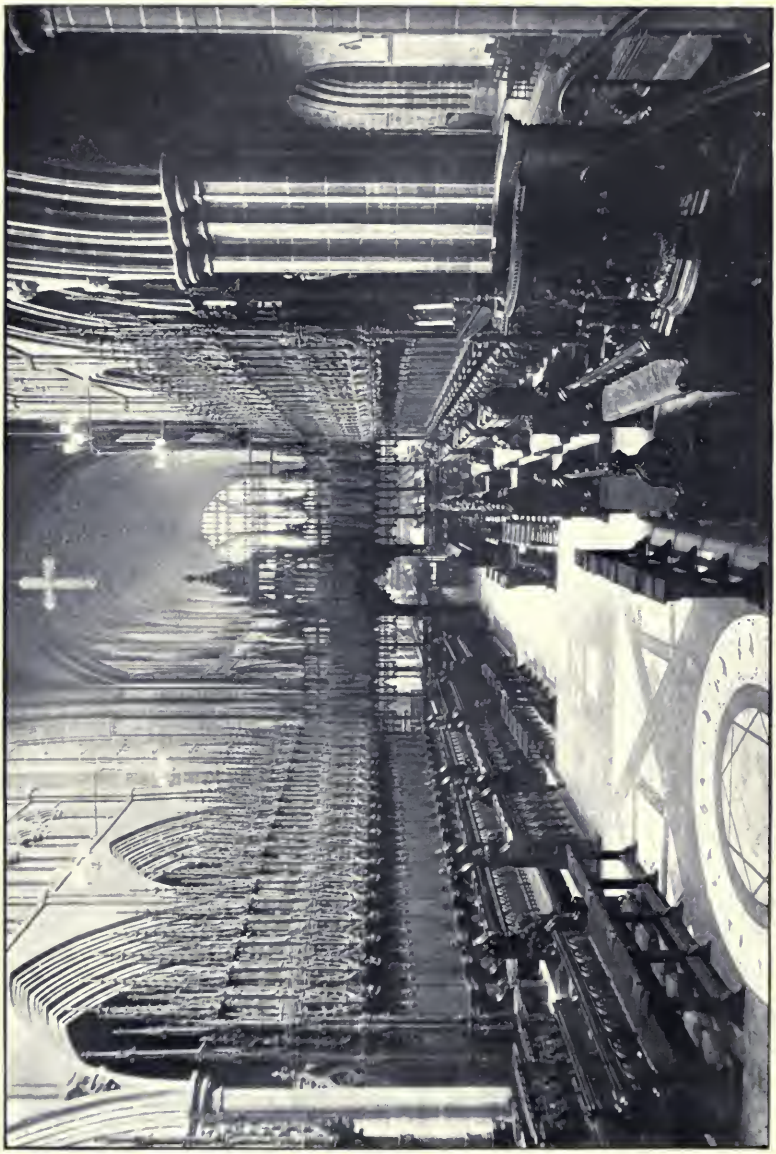


Durham

but still more to the west, wholly in the nave. In Gothic days, however, in English plans—Westminster is French in plan—the tendency was more and more to place the choir of the monastic and collegiate churches in the eastern limb, just as in a parish church. In the cathedrals the precedent was first set at Canterbury, where in 1096 Prior Ernulph set out a new eastern limb consisting of an eastern apse preceded by no less than nine bays. Sometimes there was a special reason for the removal of the choir from the crossing and the nave. In several cases —in pious recollection of the burial of many a martyr in Early Christian days down in the catacombs of Rome—the Italian practice of constructing a crypt beneath the eastern limb was followed. This had been so as early as St Wilfrid, 671-678, whose crypts at Ripon and Hexham still survive, and in the Anglo-Saxon cathedrals of Winchester, Worcester, Rochester, Gloucester, Canterbury, York, and Old St Paul's. And when these were remodelled by the Norman conquerors, in all cases the crypt was reproduced. Such crypts of course necessitate the building of the eastern limb at a higher level than crossing and nave; in some cases, *e.g.*, at Canterbury, the difference in height is very considerable. The result must have been that where as at Canterbury the sanctuary was a long one, the High altar at its east end must have been invisible, or nearly so, to monks seated in the crossing and nave. Consequently, first at Canterbury *c.* 1100, in the thirteenth century at Rochester, Old St Paul's and Worcester, and in the fourteenth century at Winchester and York, the stalls were removed to the eastern limb, the western portion of which now became choir. The only exception among cathedrals with crypts is Gloucester, where the crypt is low and the eastern limb is short and where the stalls remain to this day beneath the central tower. The example set by cathedrals with crypts was soon followed by churches of every degree which had none; whether Benedictine, such as at Chester, Augustinian, as at Carlisle, or served by Secular Canons, as at Exeter. And so in the churches of monks, regular canons and secular canons alike, most of the ecclesiastical authorities reverted to what had been all along the normal plan of the English parish church, viz., an eastern limb containing choir as well as presbytery.*

The length of the stalled choir varied of course with the number of monks or canons serving the church. In a church of the first rank, such as Lincoln or Chester, about sixty stalls seems as a rule to have been found sufficient. These

* For plans of St Gall, Kirkstall, Westminster, Canterbury, Exeter, York, see the writer's *Gothic Architecture in England*.



Chester

would generally occupy three bays; where more than three bays are occupied with stalls, it is usually because more stalls have been added at some later period, as at Lincoln, Norwich, and Henry the Seventh's chapel, Westminster. In the centre, between the stalls, a considerable space had to be left free, in order to leave room for processions from the High Altar to the lectern and to the ecclesiastics in their stalls; as well as for processions of the whole ecclesiastical establishment on Palm Sunday, Corpus Christi day, Easter Sunday and other festivals, and on every Sunday in the year. The lectern also was often of great size, and a gangway had to be left on either side of it. In Lincoln Minster the space from one chorister's desk to the chorister's desk opposite is 18 feet: from the back of the northern to the back of the southern stalls is 40½ feet, which is above the average breadth of an English cathedral or monastic choir. The breadth of the choir conditioned the whole of the planning of the church; for as a rule the nave and transepts were naturally given the same breadth as the choir, in order that the central tower should be square.

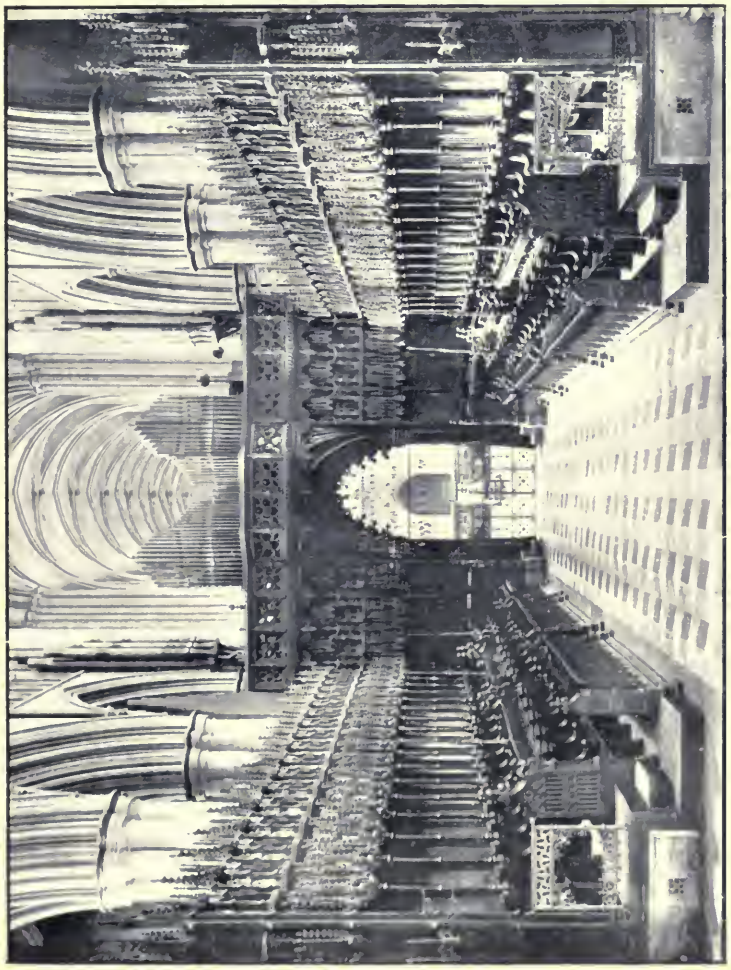
As for the number of rows of stalls on either side of the choir, it was usually three, rising successively in height; at Lincoln the floor of the uppermost row is 2 feet 6 inches above that of the choir; the canopies rise 22 feet above the floor. At Lincoln modern additions have been made; at present the upper row consists of 62 canopied stalls; 12 of them being "return" stalls facing east; 25 facing north and 25 facing south. Below them is a row of stalls without canopies; of these lower stalls there were originally 46; in front of these again are the seats of the "children of the choir."

The number of stalls in the uppermost row was regulated in a collegiate church by the number of prebends founded in the church; in a monastic church by the number of monks in the monastery. At Westminster the number of monks between 1339 and 1538 varied from 49 to 52, 47, 30; in the upper stalls there was accommodation for 64. At Southwell there were 16 prebendaries; at times some of these were foreigners, and never visited Southwell or England; the rest stayed in their country parishes, and it was sometimes with great difficulty that a single prebendary could be got together to take charge of the Minster services; they had, however, deputies; and for them and their masters the two western bays of the present choir were probably appropriated. And for the meetings of this collegiate body, which were held seldom, and which hardly ever had an attendance of more than a half dozen prebendaries, one of the most magnificent Chapter houses in

England was built. At Wells there were 54 canons or prebendaries, each with his own separate estate or prebend; the greater number of them resided on their prebendal estates in the country; only on rare occasions did they come up to Wells, and then probably only for the time occupied by some important meeting; even on such occasions there seem never to have been more than 20 canons present.* Nevertheless stalls were duly provided for the whole 54, and the Psalter was divided into 54 portions for daily recitation by the Bishop and his canons. Each of these absentee canons at Wells had or was expected to have a deputy in the form of a "vicar choral" who was paid by him a small stipend called "stall-wages." A beautiful street of little houses—one of the loveliest things in that loveliest of English cities—built for the vicars, still survives at Wells; others at Hereford, Lincoln, Chichester and elsewhere. At Wells the first and highest row of stalls was in practice occupied by the senior canons, the priest-vicars and deacons; the second row by junior deacons, subdeacons and others; the third row by choristers on the foundation; in front of that was a seat for choristers on probation. The seating of the choirs, however, naturally differed with the constitution of the collegiate body. Beverley Minster was not a cathedral proper; but its church and its establishment were on cathedral scale, and there are no less than 68 stalls. At Beverley the exact position in the upper row of the provost, treasurer, chancellor, clerk of the works, and other dignitaries was definitely settled in 1391 by Thomas Arundel, Archbishop of York. He directed that the clerks or vicars should occupy the lower stalls, each in front of the canon, his master; and that the choristers should sit in front of the clerks. "Clerici vero et omnes et singuli in secunda forma qui libet coram magistro suo. Pueri vero seu choristae ante clericos predictos loca sua teneant ut fieri consuevit etiam ab antiquo."† At the back of the canons' stalls in many churches, *e.g.*, Chester and Norwich cathedrals (48), may still be seen painted the name of the country parish where the canon's prebend lay. Appointments to such canonries are still regularly made; but it has become usual to style the occupants "honorary

* For an account of the working of the system of Secular Canons in the English cathedrals see Canon Church's paper in *Archæologia*, lv.; Professor Freeman's *Cathedral Church of Wells;* Mr A. F. Leach on *Beverley Minster* in vols. 98 and 100 of the Surtees Society, and on *Southwell Minster* in the 1891 volume of the Camden Society; and Rev. J. T. Fowler, D.C.L., on *Ripon Minster* in vols. 64, 74, 78, 81 of the Surtees Society.

† See Mr A. F. Leach's *Memorials of Beverley Minster*, Surtees Society, vols. 98 and 108.



Beverley Minster

canons" or "prebendaries." As a matter of fact they are just as much canons as the residentiaries. The difference is that the latter come into residence for three months a year or longer, while the former need not come at all; and if they did come, there is no house to receive them nor any stipend. How the cathedral and collegiate establishments lost, long before the Reformation, the services of the great majority of their staff cannot be told here; partly it arose from sheer neglect of duty, partly it was imposed on the canons by the necessity of serving in their parish churches and of superintending their estates.

At the backs of canons' stalls is sometimes painted the verse of a psalm. This refers to a very ancient usage. The daily recitation of the whole Psalter by the members of a cathedral chapter, according to the psalms attached to their respective prebends, formed part, in the opinion of Mr Henry Bradshaw, of the *Consuetudines* introduced by the Norman bishops in the twelfth century. In the *Liber Niger* or *Consuetudinary* of Lincoln Minster, copies of which, earlier than 1383, remain in the Muniment Room, it is stated that "it is an ancient usage of the church of Lincoln to say one mass and the whole psalter daily on behalf of the living and deceased benefactors of the church." At Wells also the whole Psalter was recited daily for the same pious purpose. At Lincoln tablets still are to be seen on the backs of the stalls giving the initial verse in Latin of the psalms which the holder of the prebend is bound to recite daily: and at the installation of each prebendary, the Dean calls his attention to the tablet and admonishes him not to discontinue the obligation (52). Even at St Paul's, though the original stalls all perished in the fire of 1666, fifteen of the present stalls on each side are inscribed with the Latin words with which various psalms commence; the Psalter here being divided into thirty portions.

CHAPTER III

CANOPIED STALLS

It is probable that all the back stalls of monastic and collegiate churches had originally some form of canopy. For this there was a very practical reason, in the desire of the occupants of the stalls to have their tonsured heads protected from down draughts, which from open triforium chambers imperfectly tiled must often have been excessive. A great number of these canopies have been destroyed, usually in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, to make room for galleries, *e.g.*, at Wells in 1590 and 1690, and Hexham in 1740.* In Belgium not a single set of stalls retains canopies. When the galleries were removed in modern restorations, the ancient forms of canopy were frequently not replaced, but something of modern design was put up. This should be borne in mind in examining the cresting of the stalls as it is at present; much of it is not original either in material or design.

The following is a list approximately in chronological order of some of the finest sets of stalls in cathedral, monastic, collegiate and parochial churches.

Rochester Cathedral	1227	Carlisle Cathedral	1433
Winchester Cathedral	1305	Sherborne Abbey	1436
Chichester Cathedral	1335	Hereford St Peter	1450
Ely Cathedral	begun in 1338	St David's	1470
Lancaster Church	1340	Windsor	1480
Gloucester Cathedral	1350	Ripon	1500
Lincoln Minster	1370	Manchester	1508
Abergavenny	1380	Westminster	1509
Hereford Cathedral	1380	Christchurch	1515
Hereford All Saints	1380	Bristol	1520
Chester Cathedral	1390	Dunblane	1520
Nantwich	1390	Beverley Minster	1520
Stowlangtoft	1400	Newark	1525
Wingfield, Suffolk	1415	King's College, Cambridge	1533, 1633, 1676
Higham Ferrers	1415		
Norwich Cathedral	1420	Aberdeen	1520

* Views of galleried choirs may be seen in Britton's *Cathedral Antiquities*; Norwich, ii. 13, Oxford, ii. 10.

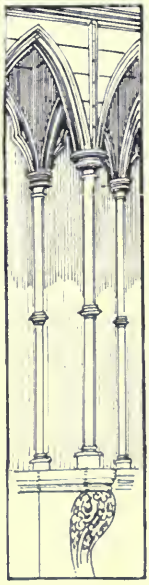
Rochester

Cartmel	1620	Sherburn Hospital, Durham	1665
Brancepeth	1630	Sedgefield	1680
Durham Cathedral	1665	St Paul's Cathedral	1697
Bishop Auckland Chapel	1665	Canterbury Cathedral	1704

The stalls of the churches of Ratzburg illustrated by M. J. Gailhabaud, vol. iv., seem to be of the middle of the twelfth century; they are of clumsy design and in a fragmentary condition. At Hastières and Gendron-Celles, both near Dinant, Belgium, are simple stalls of the thirteenth century.*

In France the chief examples are those in Notre Dame de la Roche; fragments occur also in Poitiers cathedral and the church of Saulieu.†

The earliest stallwork of which we have remains is in Rochester cathedral (30). From fragments which remained it was found that the stalls had been about 3 feet 6 inches high, and had hinged seats only 13½ inches from the floor; there was a space of 2 feet 9 inches between the seat and the form in front, and the seat was 2 feet deep.‡ There was but a single row of stalls, and the forms were very low; only 22¼ inches above the platform on which they stood. They are too low to have been used as book rests; which indeed would have been unnecessary, as the monks knew the Psalter and their services by heart; the only service books employed being the big books which lay on the great lectern in the gangway of the choir. It is probable that the forms were of use at certain parts of the service when the monks were *prostrati super formas*.§



Westminster

At Westminster the original stallwork of the choir has perished; fortunately, however, a sketch of a portion of it has been preserved (31). That the sketch is trustworthy may be seen by comparing it with the description of the stalls by Dart in his *Westmonasterium* (1742), who says that "the stalls were crowned with acute Gothic arches supported by pillars." The sketch shews slender shafts with molded capitals, neckings

* Illustrated in Macterlinck, *La genre satirique dans la sculpture flamande et wallonne*, page 12.

† See Viollet-le-Duc's *Dictionnaire*, viii. 464.

‡ See C. R. B. King in *Index* to *Spring Gardens Sketch Book*, ii. 46, and Plate XLVI.

§ Hope's *Rochester Cathedral*, pp. 110, 111.

It is illustrated in Professor Lethaby's *Westminster Abbey*, p. 23, from Sandford's *Coronation of James II.*, and is reproduced above.

Peterborough

and bases, supporting lancet arches which are without cusps; at the back are trifoliated lancets. The work belongs to the period when the eastern bays of the nave were built, viz., 1258 to 1272. In Henry VII.'s chapel are two misericords of conventional foliage; no doubt they belonged originally to Henry the Third's choir. A valuable and little known example of a thirteenth century stall survives at Hemingborough, Yorkshire (87). At Peterborough also fragments of stalls of the same century remain; but they have backing of Jacobean character (32). At Gloucester a fragment of a thirteenth century stall has been preserved behind the seat of the Canon in residence.

Apart from the above, we seem to have no stallwork of earlier date than the fourteenth century. Of that period the earliest and perhaps the most beautiful is that in Winchester cathedral. The pulpit was given by Prior Silkstede, whose name is inscribed on it; he was prior from 1498 to 1524; the desks and stools of the upper tier have the date 1540. The canopies are of one story. Each is surmounted by a straight sided gable or pediment, which is crocketed and finialled and has compound cusping. The upper part of each gable is perforated with a multifoiled trefoil. Below, the stall is spanned by a broad pointed arch, which is subdivided into two pointed and detached arches, with foliated cusps. These two minor arches carry circles with varying tracery. At the back of each stall (35) is a broad arch containing a pair of detached pointed trifoliated arches supported by shafts whose capitals are alternately molded and foliated. These two small arches carry a circle within which is inscribed a cinquefoil, cusped and foliated. The spandrils between each pair of containing arches at the back of the stalls are occupied by foliage admirably carved, in which are figures of men, animals, birds, &c. There is no pronounced ogee arch anywhere, though there is a suspicion of one where the open trefoils of the gables rest upon the containing arches. The tracery too of all the circles is geometrical, *i.e.*, composed of simple curves; there is no flowing or ogee tracery with compound curves. It may be assumed therefore that the work is earlier than *c.* 1315. On the other hand the foliage of the spandrils has pronounced bulbous or ogee curves and the pediments contain compound cusping; both features being characteristic of ornament of the first half of the fourteenth century. Taking all into account, 1305 may be taken as an approximate date for this superb work. It is usually assigned to the year 1296, on the ground of similarity of design to that of the Westminster tomb of Edmund Crouchback who died in

Winchester Cathedral

Winchester Cathedral

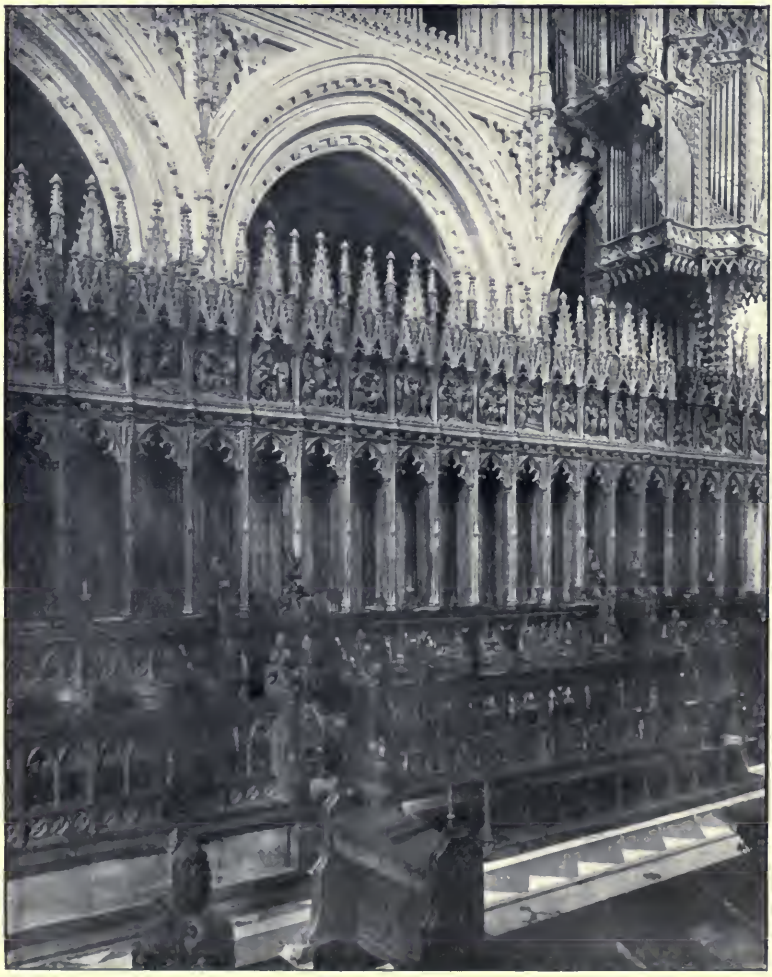
that year; but that is to forget that he died in debt, leaving instructions that he was not to be buried till his debts were paid: it is likely therefore that his tomb is several years later than 1296; indeed, except that its main arch has not ogee arches in its cusping, it is not much earlier in design than the adjoining tomb of Aymer de Valence, who died in 1324. Comparison may be made also with the monument in Winchelsea church of Gervase Alard, who was still alive in 1306; and with the monuments in Ely cathedral of Bishop

Chichester

Louth (*ob.* 1298) and in Canterbury cathedral of Archbishop Peckham (*ob.* 1292).

On the other hand in Chichester cathedral (36), the ogee motive is supreme. There are no more pointed arches; every arch is an ogee; and the cresting consists of wavy tracery surmounted by a battlement. The cusping of the upper ogee arches is compound; the foliage of pronounced bulbous character. It is unlikely that this work can be much earlier than that of the Ely stalls, which were not begun till 1338. On the evidence of costume and armour it would seem that the misericords were in course of execution between *c.* 1320 and *c.* 1340; the stallwork would probably be the last part of the work; and

as the Chichester Records are reported to assign the work to Bishop John Langton, who died in 1337, we may assign 1335 as an approximate date to the stalls.



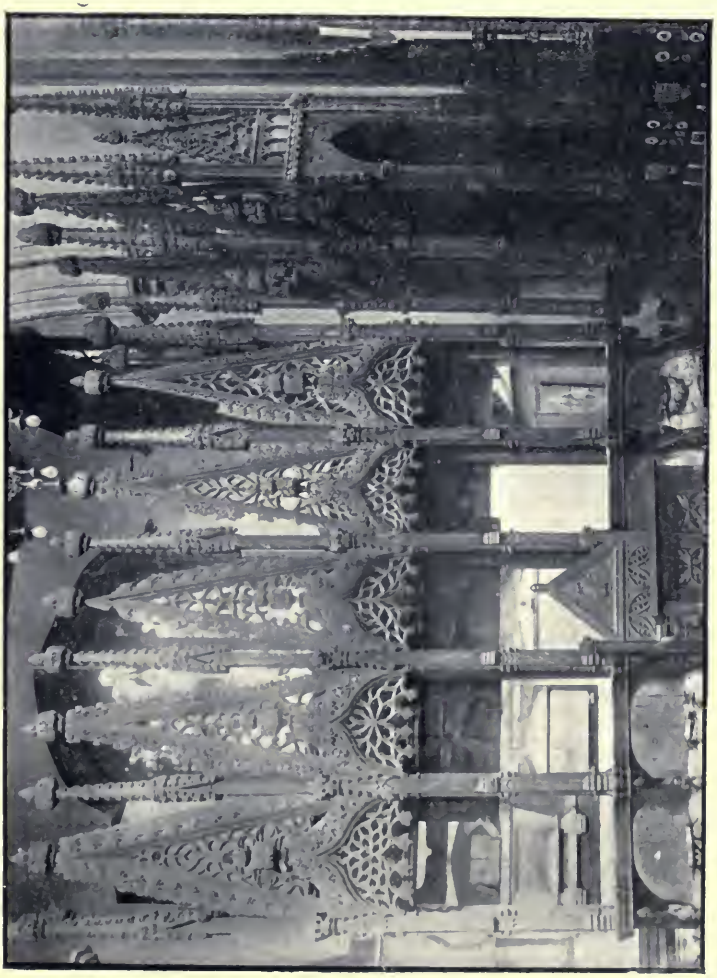
Ely

When we come to Ely, we deal with ascertained dates; it is known that the stalls were commenced in 1338. They are on

a noble scale, but have been "improved" by restorers, who among things have actually inserted Belgian carvings in the upper niches. These stalls have two distinct tiers of canopies, so that they rise to a considerable height. Each of the lower canopies has a pointed arch with compound ogee cusping; above each of these is a niche with three gabled canopies carrying a low spirelet which is flanked by ornate pinnacles; the whole forming a very beautiful composition. It is a great advance from the one-story design of Chichester (36), to the two stories of Ely.

Gloucester

The great east window of Gloucester choir was glazed *c.* 1350; by which date half of the stalls were ready. The northern stalls are the work of Abbot Staunton (1337-1351); the southern of Abbot Horton (1351-1377); they replace thirteenth century stalls erected by Elias de Lideford. The design of the stalls is curious and interesting. In the canopy the leading motif is the "bowing ogee," repeated twice; it is well seen in the contemporary work of the Percy monument at Beverley and the arcading of Ely Lady Chapel. The upper and acutely pointed ogee is finialled, and is flanked by battlemented and crocketed pinnacles; behind is a battlemented,



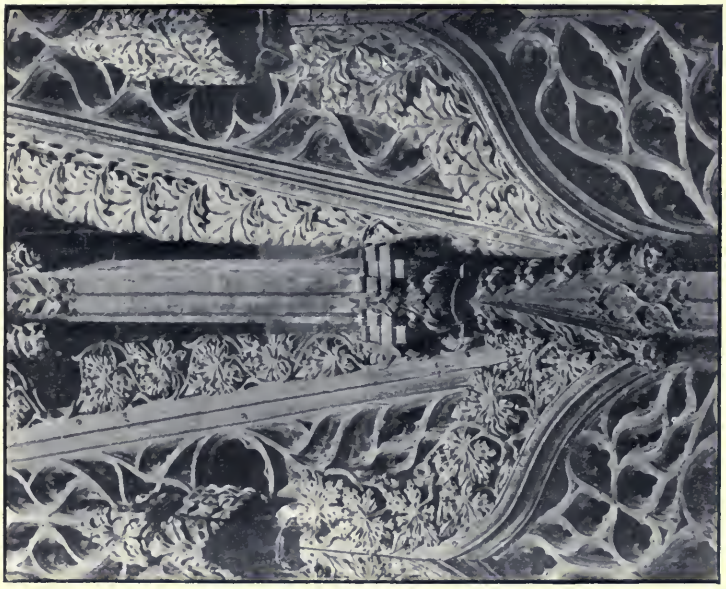
Lancaster

crocketed and finialled spirelet. Behind the spirelets is arcading composed of window tracery; and above the arcading is a crested horizontal cornice. At first sight the design looks no more advanced than that of Ely; but if the tracery of the arcading be examined, it will be found that the three lower lights have supermullions, and that the centre-pieces are straight-sided. In woodwork, as in stone, it was at Gloucester that the reign of the straight line commenced (38).

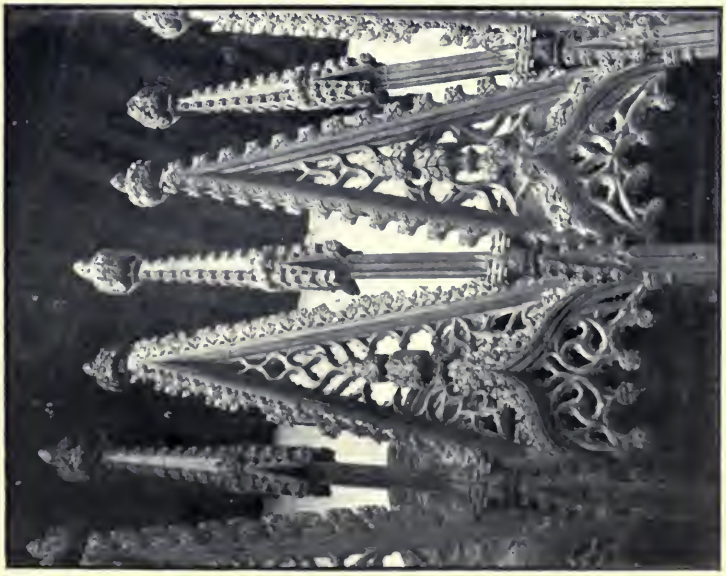
Then comes a group of stalls which it is not easy to date, but all of which are redolent of fourteenth century inspiration; those of Lancaster church, those of the cathedral and All Saints' church at Hereford, and those of Abergavenny priory and Norwich cathedral. The Lancaster stalls are the *chef-d'œuvre* of English woodwork, wonderful alike in design and execution; in woodwork they must have been in their day unrivalled; in stone they find a compeer in the marvellous detail of the Percy monument and in the still finer work at the back of the reredos in Beverley Minster. They do not shew the slightest sign of the revolution of design which had commenced in Gloucester transept *c.* 1330, and which by the end of the century was to overspread all England; they are the natural development of the design of the first half of the fourteenth century carried forward to an extent for which the only parallel is to be found in the highly developed Flamboyant detail of French, Spanish, and Flemish design of the middle and latter part of the fifteenth century. So inordinately Flamboyant are the traceries (41, 42) that one would unhesitatingly ascribe them to Continental artists did one not see the touch of the English craftsman everywhere; compare for instance the tracery shewn at the top of page 42 with that of the west window of the far-away church of Snettisham, Norfolk.* One hesitates to assign to the Lancaster work such an early date; but if the Percy monument was in course of erection, as we know it was, soon after 1340, it is quite possible that the Lancaster stalls also date before the arrival of the Black Death in 1349-50. After that date a great change came over design; the rich exuberance of Ely Lady Chapel, the Easter sepulchres, sedilia and piscinas of mid-Lincolnshire and the Percy monument at Beverley, appear no more. Any lingering hesitation one may have, however, is removed by a scrutiny of the moldings, especially those of the capitals, neckings and bases;† they are just those which were in fashion *c.* 1340. The Lancaster stalls may be regarded as the Flamboyant version of the stallwork of Winchester cathedral,

* Illustrated in *Gothic Architecture in England*, 481.

† See *John O'Gaunt's Sketch Book*, vol. i.



Lancaster



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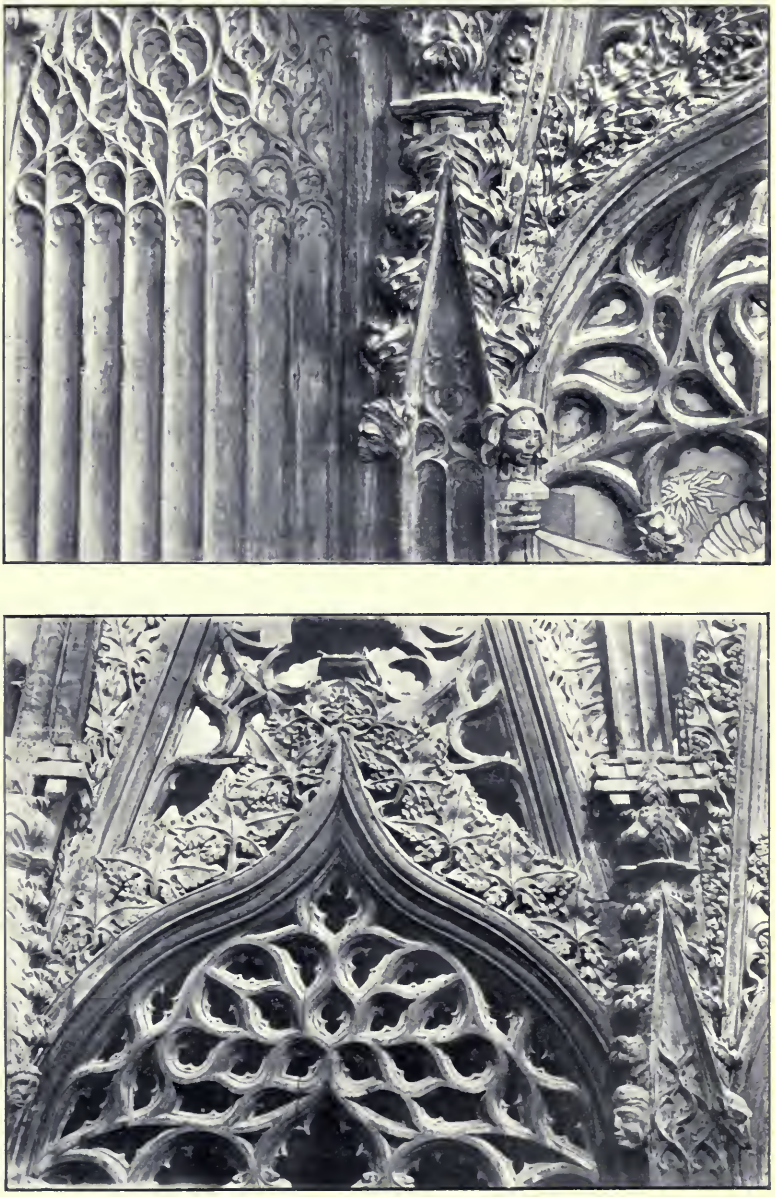
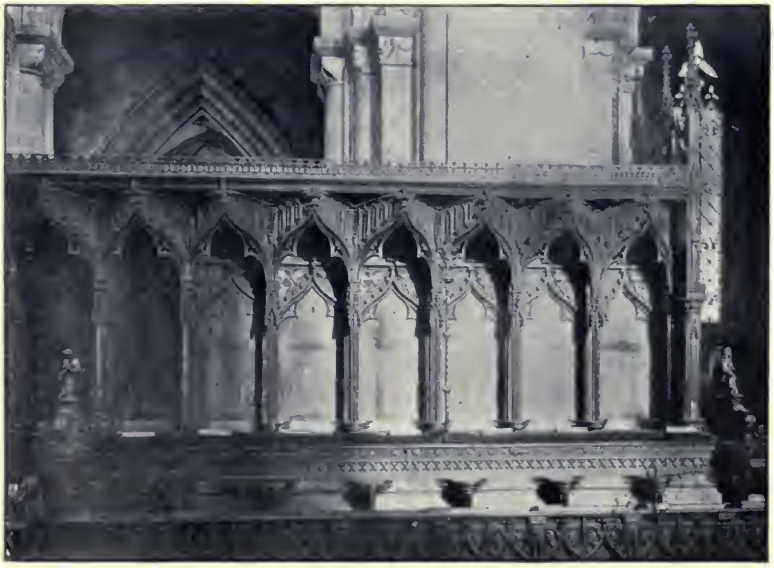


Lancaster

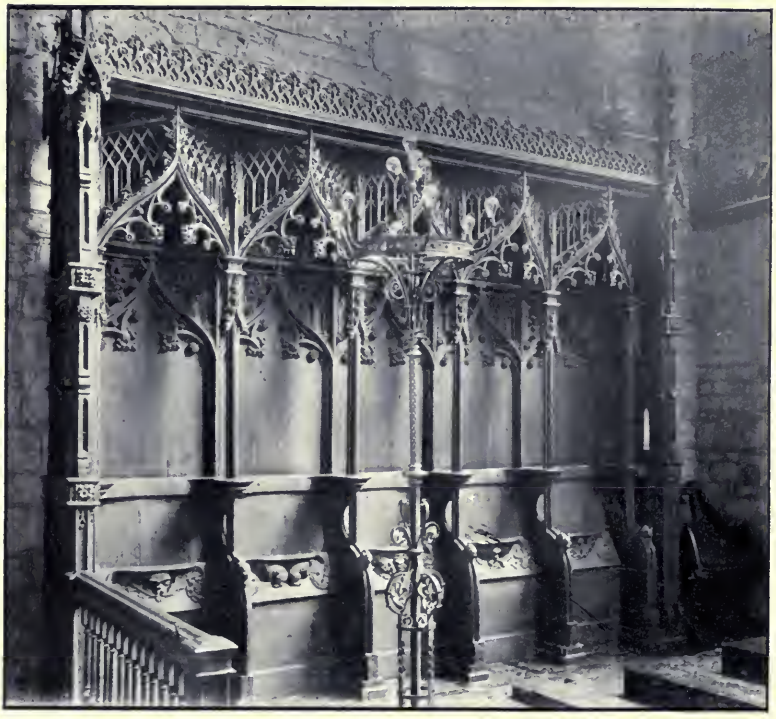
with which they should be compared (34). Like the Winchester stalls, they are but one story high; they do not aspire to the two stories of Ely and Norwich. There is a tradition, unsubstantiated, that these stalls came from Cockersand abbey in 1543. But St Mary's, Lancaster, was a priory church attached, first, to the abbey of St Martin, Sées, in Normandy, and then, when alien priories were suppressed, transferred to Sion abbey, Middlesex. In 1367 Lancaster priory had a revenue of £80, say £1,200 per annum, and was quite able to provide stalls for itself.



Hereford Cathedral

The lower part of each canopy consists of an ogee arch; this is somewhat low, but in compensation is surmounted by an exceptionally lofty pediment. Both ogee arch and straight-sided pediment are filled with perforated tracery. All this tracery, both above and below, differs from bay to bay; the craftsman would not and could not repeat them; he was simply overflowing with inventive design. The tracery of the ogee arch rests on an arch, usually an ogee arch, which is cusped in ogee, semicircular or segmental curves, tipped with charmingly diversified pendants of faces, fruits and foliage; the interval between

the two arches is filled with a network of compound curves—a labyrinth of beautiful forms—enticing the eye to attempt to follow their ramifications by ever new routes; each little pattern is cusped, and each has the ogee curve at one end or both ends, or at one side (41). Equally ingenious and diversified is the tracery which fills up the tall pediment. The broad band of foliated ornament, which forms a kind of continuous crocketing,



Hereford All Saints'

in spite of much mutilation remains the richest example in English woodwork.* Notice too the little masks which immortalise the features of the Lancaster men of 1340; sometimes no doubt they represent the carvers themselves.

In Hereford cathedral the stalls are of one story and have a

* Here, as always, one has to recognise the technical and artistic excellence of Mr Crossley's photography; he has even reproduced the cobwebs.

Hereford All Saints'

horizontal cresting. At the back of each stall is an ogee arch, and in front a bowing ogee arch; there is some lack of contrast. The sides of the upper ogees are prettily flanked by graduated window tracery; and the great multiplication and predominance

Abergavenny

Wingfield

of the vertical line makes it likely that the stalls were put up rather after than before the Black Death (43).

At All Saints', Hereford, is a range of stalls of remarkable beauty. They have the bowing ogees, the compound cusping, the intersecting wavy tracery of the first half of the fourteenth century; yet the cusping and tracery are not in the early manner. In the cathedral the bowing ogees meet at an angle of nearly 45°; at All Saints', they project but slightly, meeting with a very obtuse point. All Saints' has ogee canopies under a coved horizontal tester with supporting shafts, as in the cathedral. In the latter the cornice of the tester on the south side has a perforated battlemented parapet; that on the north (43) has brattishing; at All Saints' both sides have brattishing, but the pattern is not the same. Hereford suffered much from the Black Death of 1350, and it is not likely that a parish church would be able to afford such costly stalls before the last quarter of that century. We may suggest 1380 as a probable date. It must be remembered that nearly all changes in mediæval design originated with the stone mason; it was some time before they were caught up by the craftsmen in other materials (44).

To the exquisite stallwork of Abergavenny the remarks made on that at All Saints', Hereford, again apply; it is redolent of the inspiration of the first half of the fourteenth century; but its effects are gained in a totally different way: this also may be assigned to the last quarter of the fourteenth century;* say *c.* 1380 or later (46).

The stalls at Wingfield, Suffolk, might date from 1362, when the church was made collegiate; but much work was done in the time of Michael de la Pole, 2nd Duke of Suffolk, and his wife, Catherine Stafford; he died in 1415; the badges of Wingfield and Stafford—a wing and the Stafford knot—are seen on the arches between the de la Pole chapel and the chancel. The design of the stalls and desks is such as might be expected early in the fifteenth century, especially in East Anglia, where fourteenth century design lingered long (46).

At first sight the Norwich stalls might seem to belong to the first half of the fourteenth century; as in the stalls of Chichester, the lower canopies have ogee arches; while there is a second story above, as at Ely. The exuberance of earlier design is present in the cusping and the crockets; notice how the crockets vary from bay to bay, one set being actually composed of hawks. Nevertheless supermullions rise from the apex of each minor arch of the window tracery of the spandrils,

* They are ascribed to the fourteenth century by Mr Octavius Morgan in *Monuments of Abergavenny Church.*

and are conclusive evidence that the date is considerably later. The stalls and misericords below are of two periods. In the earlier set of twenty-four the seats are polygonal; the armour depicted is that of the last half of the fourteenth century, and there are arms of donors who died respectively in 1380, 1400 and 1428; so that we may assign the approximate date of 1390 to this set of misericords. The remaining thirty-eight misericords have seats curved on plan, and, according to Mr Harrod, are not later than the middle of the fifteenth century. Now the canopies

Norwich Cathedral

extend above both sets of misericords; the probability therefore is that they were put up together with the second set of misericords. But there is one curious bit of evidence in the canopy work itself, which is here illustrated (48); viz, that one set of crockets consists of hawks with jesses. Now on the arms of John Wakering, who was bishop from 1416 to 1425 are three hawks' lures;* that being so, the probability is that the whole of the canopies, and the second set of misericords as well, are

* My attention was directed to these arms by Mr W. H. St John Hope.

of the approximate date of 1420. Though so much later than the Ely stalls, the absence of the spirelet and the retention of the horizontal cornice marks this, in spite of much beauty of detail, as a retrogressive design.

The stalls of Sherborne abbey, Dorset, are somewhat of a puzzle (49). The arch design, with the compound cusping, is in accordance with that of the lower story of the Ely stalls of 1338, except that the arches are semicircular or nearly so; but fourteenth century exuberance and versatility have faded away;

Sherborne

the design is regular, symmetrical, prim. There was a great fire in Sherborne Minster in 1436; the piers of the choir are still reddened with the flames; the former stalls would certainly be consumed, and these no doubt are their successors.

The stalls at Hereford St Peter and Stowlangtoft are illustrated to shew that not only monastic and cathedral churches, but parish churches also possessed abundance of fine stallwork. Stowlangtoft is a remote Suffolk village; but possesses a magnificent set of the original carved benches in the nave and stalls in the chancel 91). The woodwork is probably of the

date of the church, which seems to have been rebuilt late in the fourteenth or early in the following century; the Hereford church is a town church; its stalls appear to be well on in the fifteenth century (89).

In Bristol cathedral the stalls consist of a range of traceried panels surmounted by a horizontal coved cornice. There are now twenty-eight stalls. They bear the arms and initials of Abbot Elyot (1515-1526).

At St David's a totally new departure occurs in stall design; the motif now being clearly taken from an oak screen surmounted by a parapetted loft (109). In the fourteenth century stalls illustrated the ogee arch was the characteristic feature; in the fifteenth century the fashion was to take an elongated ogee arch, and truncate it, employing only the upper portion with the concave curve; these semi-ogees occur everywhere both in stone and wood; they are well seen at St David's in the backing of the stalls. This work has superseded that which was ordered to be put up in 1342 by Bishop Gower, only one fragment of which remains; it was found above the present canopy and consisted of a finialled ogee canopy, agreeing nearly in detail and character with those portions of the Bishop's throne which are of Gower's time.* The present stalls, misericords, stall backs and canopy are all fifteenth century work; on the dean's stall (in this cathedral, as nowadays at Southwell, the bishop was also dean) are the arms of Bishop Tully (1460-1481), and on the Treasurer's stall is the name of POLE, who was treasurer in the bishop's latter days. The parapets above cannot have been added till the sixteenth century; for they terminate to the east in scrolls of the form common in cinquecento work.

* Jones and Freeman's *St David's*, pp. 87 and 91.

CHAPTER IV

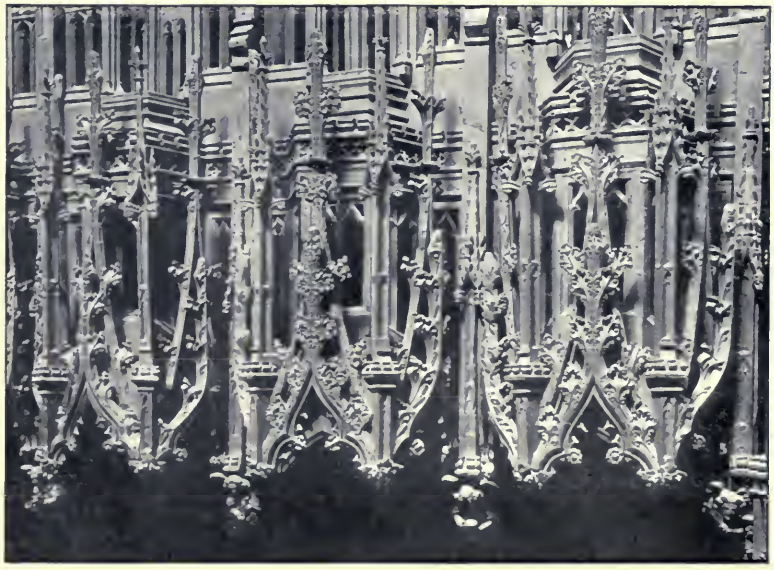
TABERNACLED STALLS

In the latter years of the fourteenth century we come to a new form of stall design; one in which the English carvers won their greatest triumphs, and which became the standard and typical design for English stalls. It is seen in the magnificent tabernacled stalls of Lincoln, Chester, Nantwich, Carlisle, Windsor, St Asaph, Ripon, Manchester, Westminster, Beverley and Durham. To distinguish this group, we may term it "stall-work with tabernacled canopies," or, more shortly, "tabernacled stalls." Though new, it is, like all design, based on earlier models. At Ely (37) two distinct and conflicting designs are combined; to those two the Lincoln carvers gave unity (17). The stallwork at Ely is in two stories; but they are not correlated in any way. The upper story consists of canopied niches, now containing figures, formerly probably occupied by paintings. At Lincoln the lower story was omitted, reducing the elevation to a single story; while the niches of the Ely upper story were brought low down, and made to enshrine the vested canons below. The Lincoln niches, however, are of more elaboration than those of Ely; in the latter each niche was fronted by three straight-sided pediments; in the former the pediments are hollow-sided, and in front of each is a bowing ogee arch. Then these niches are repeated above, except that each niche is single instead of being triple, and enshrines a statuette of wood, and is flanked by window tracery. Moreover, above each upper niche, as at Ely, rises a lofty spirelet with crockets and finials, encircled by a coronal of ogee gables and flanked by tall slender pinnacles, themselves also ornamented with miniature niches, crockets and finials. Also the upper portions of the shafts below are niched, crocketed and battlemented. Thus the Ely design becomes thoroughly harmonious and at one with itself.

As a rule, design did not originate with the wood carver; it first found expression in stone. And it well may be that to earlier work executed in stone rather than to the stallwork of

Lincoln

Ely the Lincoln design is to be attributed. At any rate, the tabernacled canopies of wood are anticipated in most marked fashion in the monument of Archbishop Stratford in Canterbury cathedral. He died in 1348; his monument is therefore earlier than any of the tabernacled canopies in wood. It consists of two stories, with three gables below and a single niche above; then come spirelets with pinnacles between.* There is a similar monument to Archbishop Kemp, who died in 1454. Of the Lincoln work Mr A. W. Pugin said that "the stalls are executed in the most perfect manner, not only as regards variety and



Chester

beauty of ornamental design, but in accuracy of workmanship, which is frequently deficient in ancient examples of woodwork. . . . They are certainly superior to any other choir fittings of that period remaining in England. The misericords also are all varied in design, and consist of foliage, animals, figures and even historical subjects, beautifully designed, and executed with surpassing skill and freedom." As the work was begun by the treasurer, John of Welbourn, who died in 1380, we may give it the approximate date of 1370. This is borne out by the fact

* Illustrated in Dart's *Canterbury Cathedral*, 145 and 160.

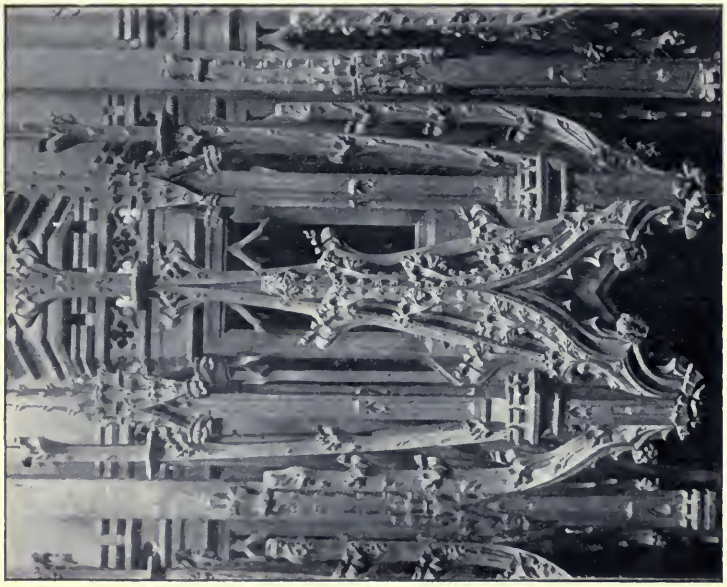
that on the base of the Dean's stall are the bearings of Dean Stretchley, who died in 1376.*

Judging from the armour represented on the misericords the design of the Lincoln stalls was copied very soon afterwards, say *c.* 1390, in Chester cathedral, but with a magnificence of foliated ornament which is reminiscent of the glorious stalls of Lancaster. For the main lines of the design, however, the new type of canopy which had been worked out at Lincoln was taken as a model; the details only are those of Lancaster, the general design is from Lincoln. As at Lincoln, the lower canopy has duplicated gables in front of each of the three faces of the main structure of the canopy. This main structure starts from between pinnacled buttresses, as it were, separating each canopy; then is brought forward like an oriel window, having square-headed traceried windows, the whole surmounted by a battlemented pierced parapet. In front of each face of the oriel is first a truncated ogee arch, and second, a complete ogee arch, both springing from a battlemented and pinnacled corner buttress. These buttresses, whether between the canopies or in front of the corners of the oriels, are truncated, the former rising not from the shoulders of the stalls below but from angels, the latter from carved bosses or paterae. The gables at the back spring from a higher level than those in front, and, as at Lincoln, are truncated ogee arches. The three front gables are complete ogee arches, which differ from those in the Lincoln stallwork in that their lower convex curve spreads outward again. This is an important matter; for though this compound ogee arch is not employed in the Lincoln stalls, yet it occurs up and down the cathedral in the stonework of the fourteenth century; *e.g.*, in the arcading under the western towers † put up by the same treasurer who paid for the stalls. It is so special and characteristic to Lincoln that its presence at Chester may be taken as a decisive proof of Lincoln influence in the design of the stalls. In the upper story is a central niche, flanked by window tracery, as at Lincoln. Above rises a lofty spirelet, encircled at its base by "Lincoln ogee" gables. Between the spirelets, as at Ely and Lincoln, are tall pinnacles. The leafage of the lower canopies should be compared with that of Lancaster. In the five examples illustrated (53, 55, 56) it will be seen how consummate and versatile in design were these mediæval craftsmen; they were bubbling over with design, and could not repeat themselves if they wished.‡

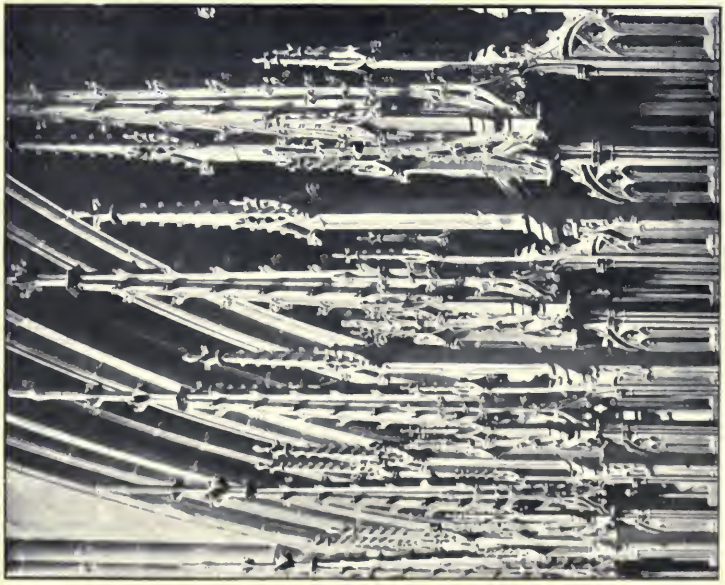
* E. Mansel Sympson's *Lincoln*, 277.

† Illustrated in the writer's *Gothic Architecture in England*, p. 269.

‡ A photograph of the north range of the Chester stalls forms the frontispiece of the writer's *Misericords*.



Chester



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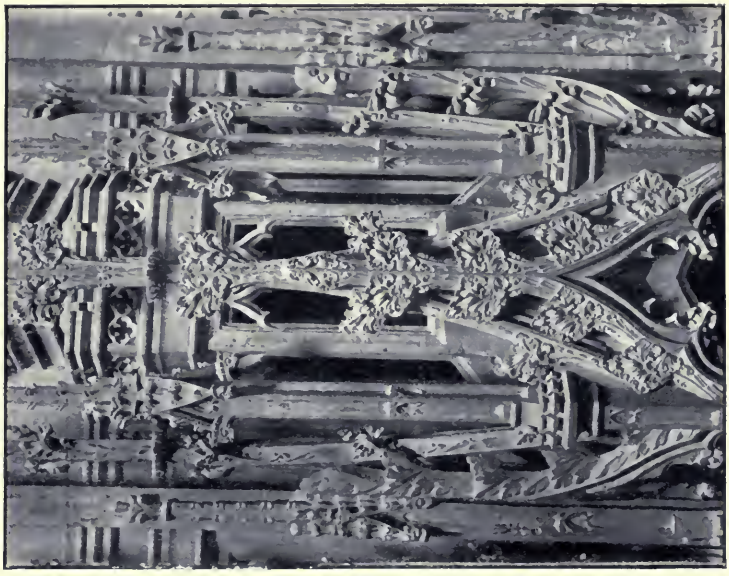

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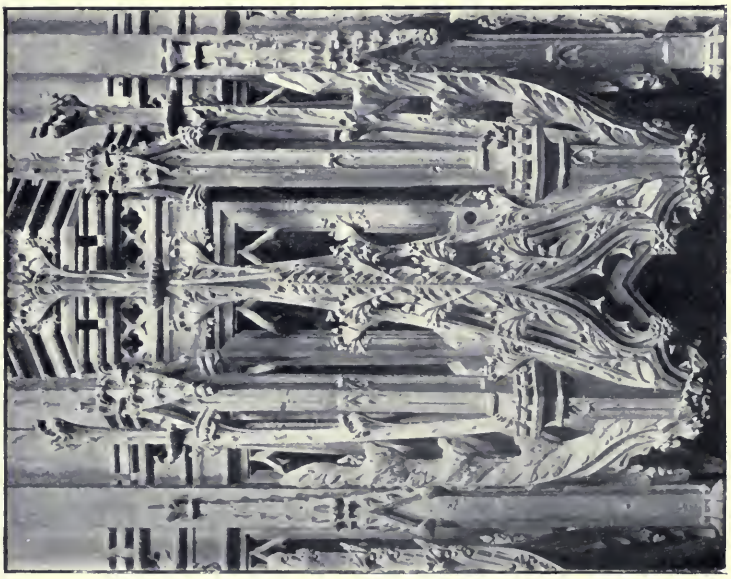

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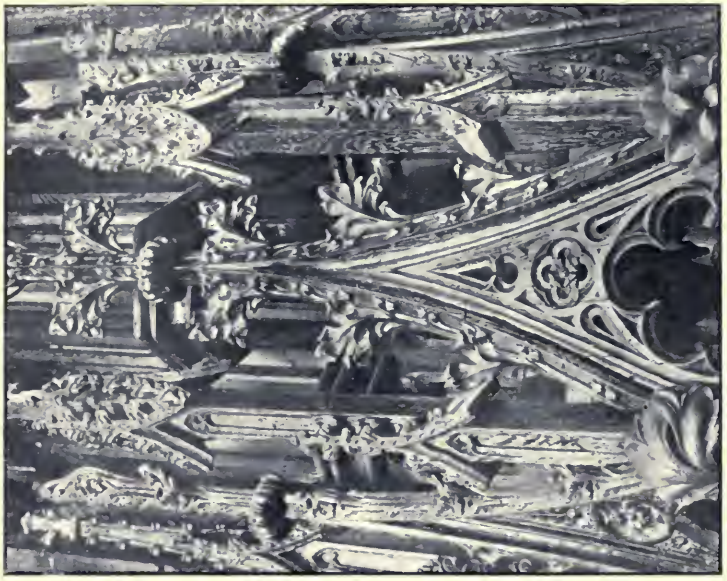
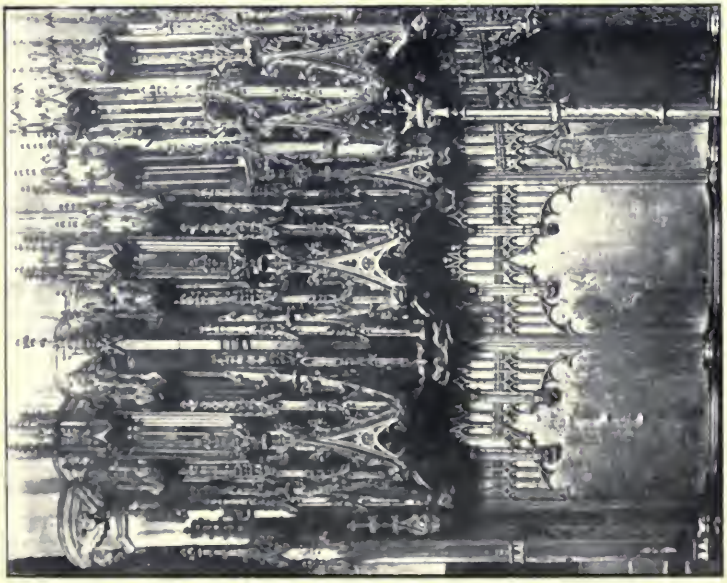
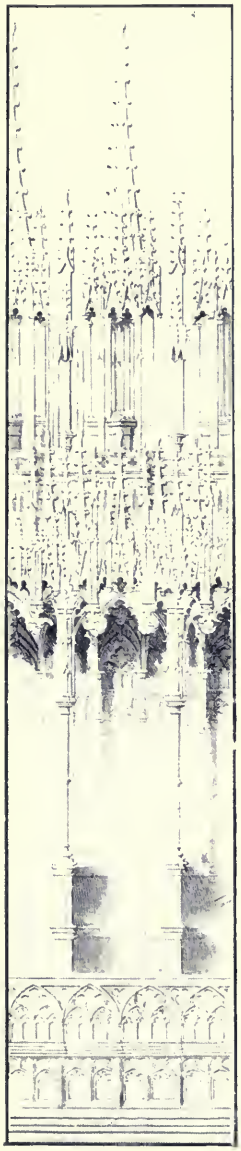


Nantwich



Nantwich



York Minster

The magnificent church of Nantwich, Cheshire, was in building before the Black Death of 1349; the work was then stopped; and when it was resumed, it was carried out in a different style. To this later period belong the south transept and the east window of the chancel with rectilinear tracery; it is probable that the pulpit and stalls also belong to this second work, *c.* 1400. The design connects itself with that of the Lincoln and Chester stalls in the absence of any line of demarcation between the upper and lower portions; but while that of Chester is reminiscent of early fourteenth century work, that of Nantwich is well advanced toward normal fifteenth century design. It is also much richer than either, the lower stage being a mass of niches and pinnacles, with angel corbels below. The great novelty at Nantwich is the absence of spirelets, the absence of which is nobly compensated for by the increased height and prominence given to the central of the three upper niches (57).

The stalls of York Minster were destroyed by fire in 1819. Both in the treatment of the supporting shafts and in the design of the single upper niches flanked by window tracery they closely resembled the Lincoln stalls, on which they were probably modelled; above the upper niches rose spirelets flanked by pinnacles. There is a marked horizontal line midway, dividing the composition into two stories (58). The presbytery of York Minster was built between 1361 and 1370; the choir between 1380 and 1400; we may therefore take 1390 as the approximate date of the stalls. They are a little later than the Lincoln stalls, and probably contemporaneous with those of Chester. A general view of the stalls appears in Drake's *Eboracum*, page 522 (18).

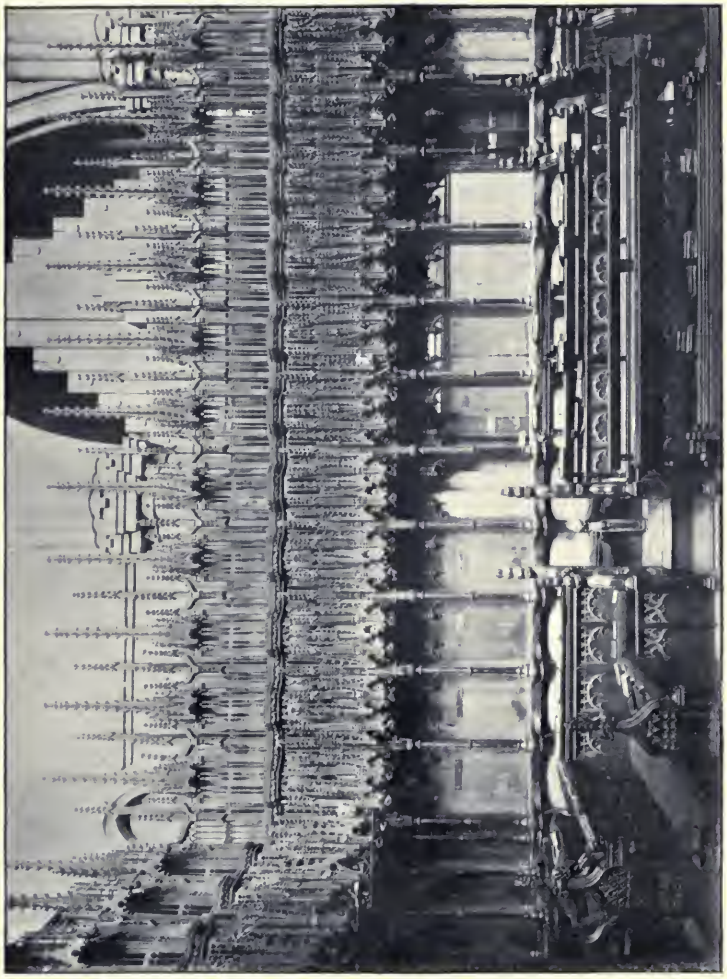
At Carlisle the stalls were erected by Bishop Strickland

(1399-1413); Prior Haithwaite is said to have added the tabernacle work after the year 1433:* it would therefore be about forty years later than that at Chester (21). The lower canopy, as before, has triple gables, which are truncated ogees, but the additional front gable of Lincoln and Chester is omitted, while the pinnacled buttresses separating the canopies are carried by shafts standing on the shoulders of the stalls. The

Carlisle

line of demarcation between the two stories, which the Lincoln and Nantwich designs had minimised, is now emphasised by making the band of quatrefoils continuous. The upper story, which in the earlier designs had had insufficient dominance, is now heightened and enlarged; it consists of three pedestalled niches instead of one; and the flanking window

* Mr C. H. Purday.



Ripon

tracery of Lincoln and Chester, with its makeshift look, is reduced in importance, forming merely the backing of the three upper niches. The spirelet above is also greatly enriched, and additional pinnacles are introduced. A little prim the design may be in comparison with the exuberance of Lincoln, Chester and Nantwich, but the proportions are fine, and were the statuettes once more in their niches, it would be a very satisfactory composition. Such work as this has well been resembled to "a whole wood, or say a thicket of old hawthorn with its topmost branches spared, slowly growing into stalls."

At St Asaph's cathedral the stalls and part of the canopies are ancient.* The cathedral was gutted by fire in 1402, and the stalls were not re-erected till 1471-1495.

Fifty years later than the Carlisle stalls were put up those of Ripon Minster (65). As two of the misericords are inscribed 1489 and 1494, they cannot be earlier than the latter year. Just as the Chester stalls were a criticism of those of Lincoln, and the Lincoln stalls of those of Ely, so the stalls of Ripon are a criticism of those of Nantwich and Carlisle. In the latter the upper story had been emphasised; at Ripon the bottom story is given the dominance; compared with the simplicity of the Carlisle design, the lower stage at Ripon, as at Nantwich, is surpassingly rich; gables and pinnacles and window tracery are loaded with beautiful detail, cusped arches are added below; finally figure sculpture is called in, and capitals and corbels are beset with tiny angels. In the string-course between the two stories quatrefoils are abandoned; it is molded, foliated and battlemented. In the upper story reappears the forest of pinnacles of Carlisle and the window tracery of Lincoln. Here, as elsewhere, the design suffers grievously from the loss of the statuettes which once ranged continuously in the upper story.

Some twenty years later, stallwork was put up in the collegiate church of Manchester. On the north side of the choir is a curious shield with the initials of Richard Beck, a Manchester merchant, by whom all the stalls on that side were erected: the southern stalls were erected by Bishop Stanley, and at the west end of them is the shield of Stanley with the Stanley legend of the eagle and child. At Manchester craftsman ambition had to surpass Ripon and Nantwich. But the lower stages of Nantwich and Ripon were unsurpassable; so they were copied, angelettes included. The string-course is strengthened and improved by additional battlements: but undue emphasis is prevented by making it discontinuous. In

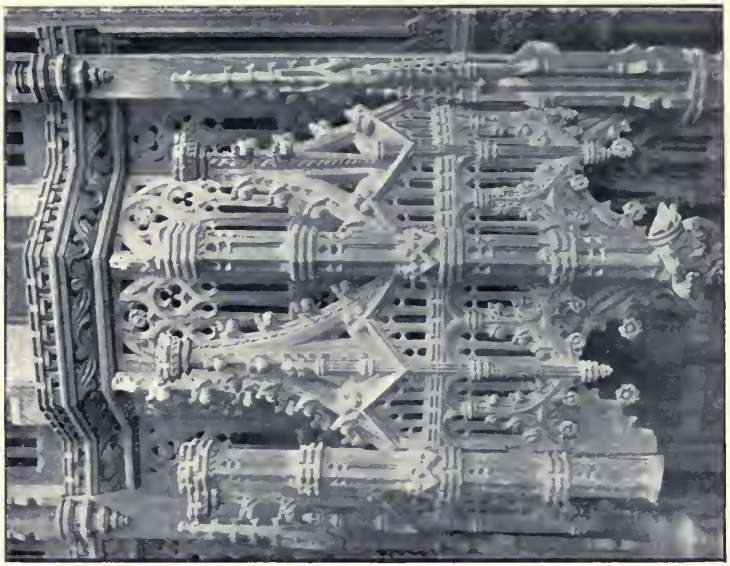
* Illustrated in Murray's *Welsh Cathedrals*, page 267.

Manchester

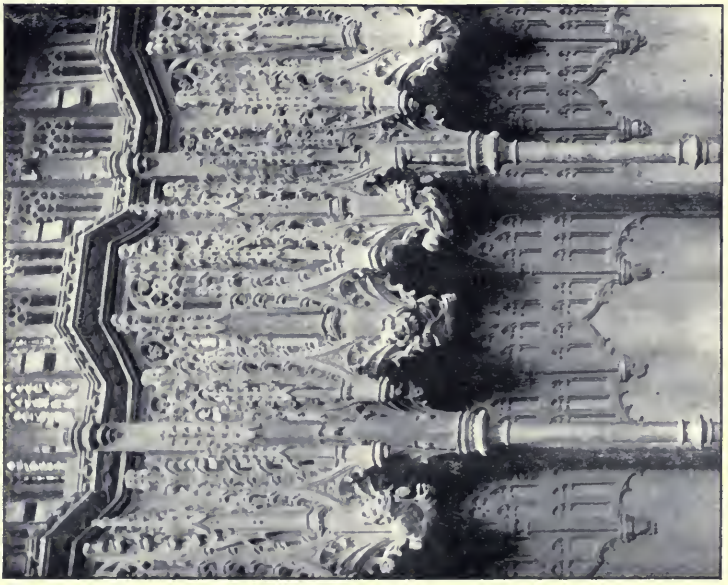
the upper story, by way of change, there is a reversion to the single niche, flanked by window tracery, of Lincoln and Chester; finally, originality is asserted by surmounting the whole, in somewhat doubtful propriety, with a continuous tester, so that

Beverley Minster

the canopies that cover the stalls are themselves covered and protected. This tester has a horizontal cornice with brattishing above and cornice braces between pendant pieces below. To make room for this the spirelets so much in vogue are replaced,



Beverley Minster



Beverley Minster

as at Nantwich, by canopies with horizontal cresting—taking it altogether, a magnificent design, if only the Ripon stalls had not existed (62).

Then come the stalls of Beverley Minster, misericords of which are inscribed with the dates 1520 and 1524; the stalls are therefore about a dozen years later than those of Manchester. They are modelled closely on those of Manchester and Ripon. It is quite conceivable that some of the carvers may have worked successively at Ripon (1500), Manchester (1508) and Beverley (1520). As at Ripon, the lower story is made predominant, the little angels being replaced, however, by human busts—no great

Beverley Minster

Beverley Minster

improvement; not that they are not full of life and interest (27, 63). The string-course is that of Manchester. The upper story has single niches flanked by window tracery, as at Manchester. The horizontal canopy of Manchester now remains over the return stalls only. On the whole it must be admitted that these stalls mark no advance. A bit of original design indeed appears at one point, where low, heavy straight-lined gables are introduced quite out of harmony with the curving ogee arches (64).

Then comes the Dissolution; a long list of Tudor monarchs reign and pass away; Stuarts take their place; Civil War follows; at length at the Restoration of 1660 the Church comes

to her own again, and John Cosin ascends the episcopal throne of Durham. True to the Church of England and loyal to Gothic Architecture, he reverts to the consecrated form, and tabernacled stalls are reared once more—one of his many contributions to the cathedral and diocese of Durham (22). Nor is the design an unworthy one; nay, rather it is a distinct improvement on that of Carlisle, Ripon, Manchester and Beverley; for by abolishing

Durham

the string-course, he reduces the design to the unity with which it started at Lincoln. Moreover, tall pinnacles had flanked the spirelets of Ely, Lincoln, Chester, Carlisle, Ripon and Beverley, so that really one could not see the wood for the trees; these pinnacles are now omitted, and the spirelets get their full value. Altogether a very fine design; and the little bits of Renaissance detail which here and there creep in, as in the bishop's mag-

nificent font cover,* only add to its charm (66). Other examples of John Cosin's time are to be seen at Brancepeth where he was formerly rector from 1626 to 1633; the stalls, screens and pulpit of that church are simply delightful (93). More of this work is to be seen in the chapel of the Bishop's palace at Bishop's Auckland; in the church of his son-in-law at Sedgefield and at Sherburn hospital. So Gothic in spirit is this work that it has been again and again ascribed to Elizabethan times, *e.g.*, by Billings in his *County of Durham*. In spite of the coarseness of some of the detail and that here and there a bit of Classical detail

Dunblane

creeps in, it is most interesting and enjoyable; would that we had more of these delightful admixtures of Classic and Gothic forms; plentiful in Spain and France, they are rare with us.

The stalls in Dunblane cathedral are thought by Messrs Macgibbon and Ross† to have been put up in the time of Bishop James Chisholm (1486-1534). In that case they would be *c.* 1520. "The work is rather rough in execution, not to be

* Illustrated in the writer's *Fonts and Font Covers*, 296.

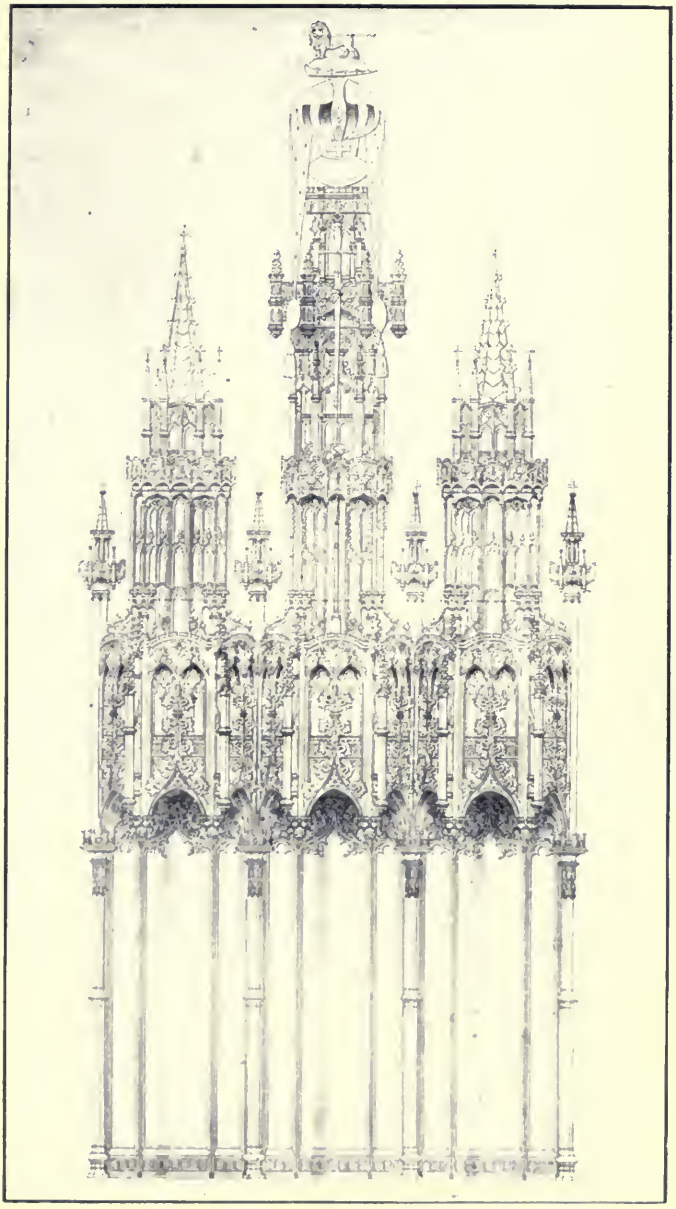
† *Ecclesiastical Architecture of Scotland*, ii. 105. Drawings by Mr J. B. Fulton appeared in the *Builder*, 1st Oct. 1898 and 2nd Dec. 1893; and by Mr A. S. Robertson in the *Builders' Journal*, 14th Jan. 1903.

compared with the more characteristic woodwork of King's College, Aberdeen"; nevertheless it is very picturesque and interesting. The introduction of the centaurs indicates Renaissance influence; the foliage carving is a rather curious mixture of late Gothic and Classic forms, such as we find elsewhere in Scottish carved work of this period. The Scottish thistle is one of the chief motifs (67).

In the chapel of King's College, Aberdeen, is a considerable amount of fine oak carved work, by far the most extensive and best of its kind in Scotland. The chapel itself, in some of its features, bears the character of the parish church at Stirling and other Scottish works of the beginning of the sixteenth century. The carved stalls, monuments, and decorative work of the interior are of the same period, but may possibly have been brought from a distance, or executed by foreign workmen engaged (like the English plumber) by the bishop. The panels are all of different design, and shew a great deal of variety combined with a sufficiently uniform effect when the work is viewed as a whole. In some of them the details are based on floral forms—thistle, vine, oak, &c.—while the conventional French fleur-de-lis is also introduced.*

At this point arises the question how far our stallwork was influenced by foreign design. It may be stated at once with confidence that of the great majority of the stalls the design is as thoroughly English as the oak of which they are built. We have seen that the flowing and ogee forms of the Ely tracery were designed not later than 1338, which is at least sixty years earlier than any work of the sort in France. We were able to see how by gradual modifications of the Ely design the craftsmen were able to advance slowly but assuredly to the stallwork of Lincoln, Chester, Nantwich, Carlisle, Ripon, Manchester, Beverley, Durham; the glorious chain of artistic success is complete; every link is there. But there are facts on the other side which, at any rate at Melrose, are beyond dispute or controversy. In 1846 a document was communicated to the Society of Antiquaries, London, from West Flanders, relating to a dispute at Bruges between William Carebis, a Scotch merchant, and John Crawfort, a monk of Melrose, on the one hand, and Cornelius de Aeltre, citizen and master of the art of carpentry of Bruges, on the other hand. The latter had contracted to supply certain stalls and to erect them in the abbey church of Melrose, after the fashion of the stalls of the choir of the abbey church of Dunis in

* Macgibbon and Ross. *Castellated and Domestic Architecture of Scotland*, v. 543; and *Builder*, lxxv. 293, in which are measured drawings by Mr J. B. Fulton.



Windsor

Flanders, with carving similar to that existing in the church of Thosan near Bruges. The stipulated price had been paid, and the master carpenter was called to account for delaying to complete the work; whereupon he pleaded various excuses, stating that the work had been impeded by popular commotions at Bruges, during which he had been deserted by his workmen and had suffered heavy losses. It was decided that Melrose abbey should bear the cost of its transport to the town of Sluys and embarkation there for Scotland, and should make some allowance to Cornelius towards his journey to Melrose; and that they should give him and his chief carver (*formiscissori*) a safe-conduct for their journey and return. This document was dated 7th October, 1441.*

No such wholesale example of foreign design occurs in England; nevertheless there are two important instances in which Flemish design is to be suspected; viz., in the Royal chapels at Windsor and Westminster. As regards the stalls in St George's chapel, Windsor, it is known that the tabernacled canopies were begun in 1477 and were completed in 1483; thus they took six years to make (69).† The canopies are known to have been made in London; the carvers being Robert Ellis and John Filles, apparently Englishmen. On the other hand the great Rood, with the statues of St George and St Edward and others, was made by Diricke Vangrove and Giles Vancastell, who are just as evidently Dutchmen; for four images the two Dutchmen were paid at the rate of 5s. per foot; for six canopies the two Englishmen received £40, say £480; *i.e.*, about £80 of our money for each canopy. Now here we have Dutch and English carvers engaged together on what was practically one work: moreover the more artistic and difficult part of the work, the figure sculpture, is entrusted to the Dutchmen. It is to the latter probably that the general lines of the design are due. The detail is sufficiently English; not so the general design. For the Windsor stallwork is intermediate between that of Chester (*c.* 1390) and Carlisle (1433) on the one hand, and Ripon (*c.* 1490) and Manchester (1508) on the other. But it is not a development arising out of either of the earlier designs, nor was the stallwork of Ripon and Manchester in any way a development from that of Windsor. All the larger stallwork

* *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries*, i. 112.

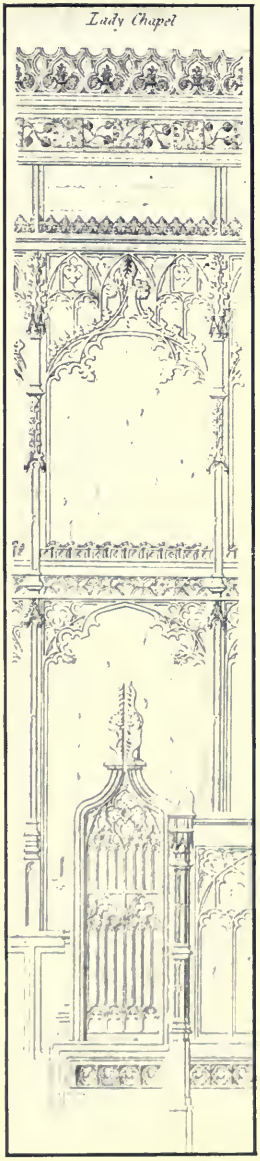
† For information relating to the Windsor stalls I am indebted to Mr W. H. St John Hope: see his paper "On a remarkable series of Wooden Busts surmounting the stall-canopies in St George's chapel, Windsor," in *Archæologia*, liv. 115, and the building accounts to be published in his forthcoming work on *Windsor Castle*.

Windsor

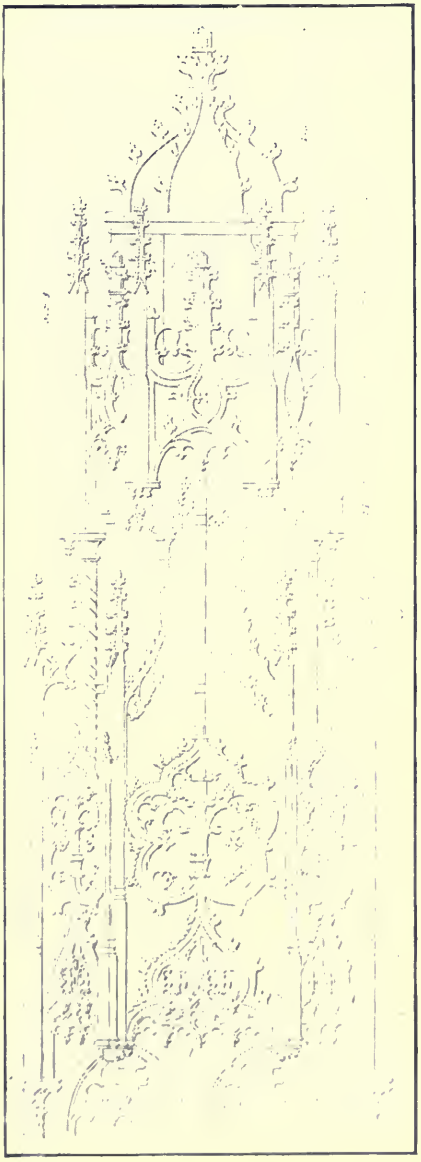
of the fifteenth century was, as we have seen, designed in two stories, rising into spirelets and pinnacles; at Windsor the double story, the spirelet and the pinnacle are all alike lacking. It is true that the original canopies were designed quite as much for the Knights of the Garter as for the Windsor Canons, and in the case of the former the design had to be accommodated to provide supports for the knights' helmets, mantles and swords; nevertheless this might have been accomplished without utterly breaking away from current design. The Windsor design, so far as English work goes, has no ancestry; its origin no doubt is to be found in the Netherlands. The Windsor stalls have been much tampered with. As Hollar's engraving in Ashmole's *Institution of the Order of the Garter* (1672) shews, over the westernmost bay on either side of the choir the canopies contained imagery and had a horizontal cresting; and all the other canopies consisted alternately of towers and spirelets; the knights being seated under the towers and the canons under the spirelets; but since the enlargement of the Order in 1786 all the spirelets have been converted into towers (71). All these towers are surmounted by wooden busts, of which the earliest go back to the time of Edward IV.; on the bust were placed the knight's helmet, crest and mantlings, which hid the busts from view; lower down, in front, hung his sword; banners were not added till a later period. At first the real sword and helm were put up; later, they were theatrical properties.

Bishop Langton's Chapel

In Winchester cathedral is stallwork of rare beauty in the Lady Chapel, which was built in the time of Bishop Courtenay, 1486-1492. In some of its details it resembles the Windsor stalls, which were completed in 1483; it is therefore feasible that



Winchester Cathedral



Westminster Abbey

some of the Windsor carvers went on to Winchester (73). South of the Lady Chapel is the chantry chapel of Bishop Langton, 1493-1500, where also the screen and coved panelling are of great excellence (72); there are no stalls.

Henry the Seventh's chapel at Westminster was built partly as a Lady Chapel, partly to be the mausoleum of Henry VII. and his Queen, and of Henry VI.* Here the canopies with tower-like form and single story and with the absence of pinnacle are plainly reminiscent of those of Windsor, and as plainly distinct from current English design, as seen at Manchester in 1508 and Beverley Minster in 1520; the Westminster and Manchester canopies were being made together; but those of Westminster have no connection with the grand Northern series of consecutive designs (131). Besides Windsor influence there may be direct influence from the Netherlands; for some of the misericords are evidently from the design of a painter or engraver, the subjects being too crowded to be properly carved in wood in so limited a space. Mr J. Langton Barnard says,† "While looking over some engravings on copper of Albert Durer, I came across one which strikingly resembled the third misericord in the upper row on the north side; the resemblance was extremely close, especially in the arrangement and folds of the woman's dress; this is stated by Bartsch in his *Catalogue* (vii. 103 and 93) to be one of his earliest plates. Another plate of Albert Durer closely resembles the corresponding misericord in the lower row on the south side, as regards the position of the limbs and the folds of the drapery; while the seventh misericord of the lower row on the south side almost exactly resembles a plate by Israel van Meckenern, of two monkeys and three young ones." These stalls formerly occupied only the three western bays of the chapel; another bay was filled with stalls when the Order of the Bath was revived by King George the First; the canopy-fronts for an additional bay on each side being got by sawing off canopy-backs and putting them up as fronts. The tabernacle work is of the richest and most diversified character, varying in every canopy (73)

* See the writer's *Westminster Abbey*, 146.
† *Sacristy*, i. 266.

CHAPTER V

RENAISSANCE STALLWORK

THUS far the stallwork has been wholly of Gothic design, or nearly so. We now come to the great change of style, the reversion to the Classic art of ancient Rome, which goes by the name of the Renaissance. Of this the chief representatives left to us are the stalls of Christchurch, Hants; King's College, Cambridge; and Cartmel, Lancashire. The stalls and misericords of Christchurch, as we see them now, are a patchwork of portions of work of several periods framed together at some more or less recent epoch; there are at least two styles of Renaissance work, and three or more of Gothic. The earlier Renaissance work, which is seen in most of the misericords and on the stall backs is that of William Eyre who was Prior from 1502 to 1520 (2). There are fifty-eight stalls; of the misericords twenty-six have been stolen or destroyed. The early date of this work makes it of exceptional importance in the history of the introduction of Renaissance art into England. One special feature of the work is the portrait panels. These also occur in a cupboard preserved in Louth church, Lincolnshire, where the panels have what look very much like portraits of Henry VII. and his queen, Elizabeth of York. It goes by the name of the "Sudbury hutch" and was the gift of Thomas Sudbury, who was vicar from 1461 to 1504: it is therefore of the time of Henry VII. These "portrait cabinets" had a great vogue in the reign of Henry VIII., and throughout the sixteenth century. Then come three important tombs by Torrigiano, executed between 1509 and 1518, that of Henry VII. and his Queen and that of Margaret Beaufort at Westminster and that of Dr Young in the Rolls chapel. Almost as early, if not quite so, is Prior Eyre's work at Christchurch. Then comes Cardinal Wolsey's work at Hampton Court, 1515 to 1525; the beautiful Marney tomb at Layer Marney, Essex, 1523; the mortuary chests in the cathedral, and the screen work both in the cathedral and in St Cross, Winchester, *c.* 1525; the chantry chapel of Prior Draper at Christchurch, 1529, and that of Lady Salisbury, which may

Christchurch

be a year or two earlier; and the screen at Swine church, Yorkshire, dated 1531. Then follow Henry VIII.'s hall at Hampton Court, 1534; and the screen at King's College, Cambridge, 1533. So that the Christchurch work stands very high on the list and deserves much more attention than it has received. The general outline of the stalls themselves is Gothic, the chief divergency being in the supports of the elbow rests and seats. Among the shafts are examples of the honeycomb form which is almost the only bit of Renaissance detail in the canopies of the Westminster stalls. At the back of the stalls are very vigorous carvings of classical dragons, serpents, hounds and human faces (76). To these last fanciful attributions have been made; *e.g.*, one has been imagined to represent Catharine of Arragon between Cardinal Wolsey and Cardinal Campeggio (77). These portrait busts have a wide distribution; they occur in wood, stone and

Christchurch

terra cotta. Noble examples are those in terra cotta at Hampton Court, which were undoubtedly imported by Cardinal Wolsey direct from Italy.* Others no doubt are the work of Italians resident in England in the first half of the sixteenth century, when Italian art and Italian literature were equally the fashion with the cognoscenti led by Henry VIII. and Wolsey; *e.g.*, the fine bust of Sir Thomas Lovell by Torrigiano, now in Westminster Abbey.† These portrait busts have a wide range—from Essex westward to Somerset, Devon and Cornwall; *e.g.*, North Cadbury, Somerset; Lapford, Devon, and Talland, Cornwall; several also occur at Hemingborough, Yorkshire. The probability is that the Italian artists entered

* The Hampton Court busts are by Giovanni de Majano, who in 1521 demanded payment for ten "medallions of terra cotta." They cost £2. 6s. 8d. each. R. Blomfield's *History of Renaissance Architecture in England*, 3.

† Illustrated in the writer's *Westminster Abbey*, 197.

King's College, Cambridge

the kingdom at Southampton; and that a few found work at Christchurch and in the south-west, but that the main body proceeded eastward to Winchester, Basing, London and Layer Marney; they have left one memorial at Oxford beneath a window at Christ Church.*

Next come the famous screen and stalls of King's College, Cambridge — "the finest woodwork this side of the Alps.' Harmonious as is the general effect of the stallwork, it was executed at three different periods. The stalls were ordered to be made by Henry VI. in his will, but were not put up till much later. About 1515 an estimate was obtained for 130 stalls, which it was found would cost about £12,000 of our money, *i.e.*, about £92 each. On the screen, which is part of the same work, are the arms, badge and initials of Anne Boleyn, who was at the height of her influence between 1531 and 1535; the stallwork may be ascribed to the same period, but as yet the stalls had plain backs. In 1633 Mr Thomas Weaver presented the large coats of arms which are seen on the backs of the stalls (78). The cresting was made between 1675 and 1678 by Thomas Austin, following more or less the style of the work below.† The screen is more completely Italian in treatment than any other work of the time, all the moldings being Classic; it is practically certain that the general design and most of the work must have been done by Italians. The design of screen and stalls alike is to be regarded as an isolated example, complete in itself. It did not grow out of anything that went before it in England, nor did it develop into anything else in England afterwards.‡

More Classical still in design—an entablature with architrave, frieze and cornice superseding the semicircular arches of the Cambridge stalls—is the superb woodwork at Cartmel, Lancashire. From the Dissolution up to 1620, the choir of Cartmel priory church was roofless; the canopies of the stalls must have perished; the stalls themselves remain, bearing the mark of long exposure to the weather. In 1620 it is recorded § that George Preston of Holker, who died in 1640, not only reroofed the chancel, "but decorated the quire and chancel with a profusion of curiously and elaborately carved woodwork" (80).

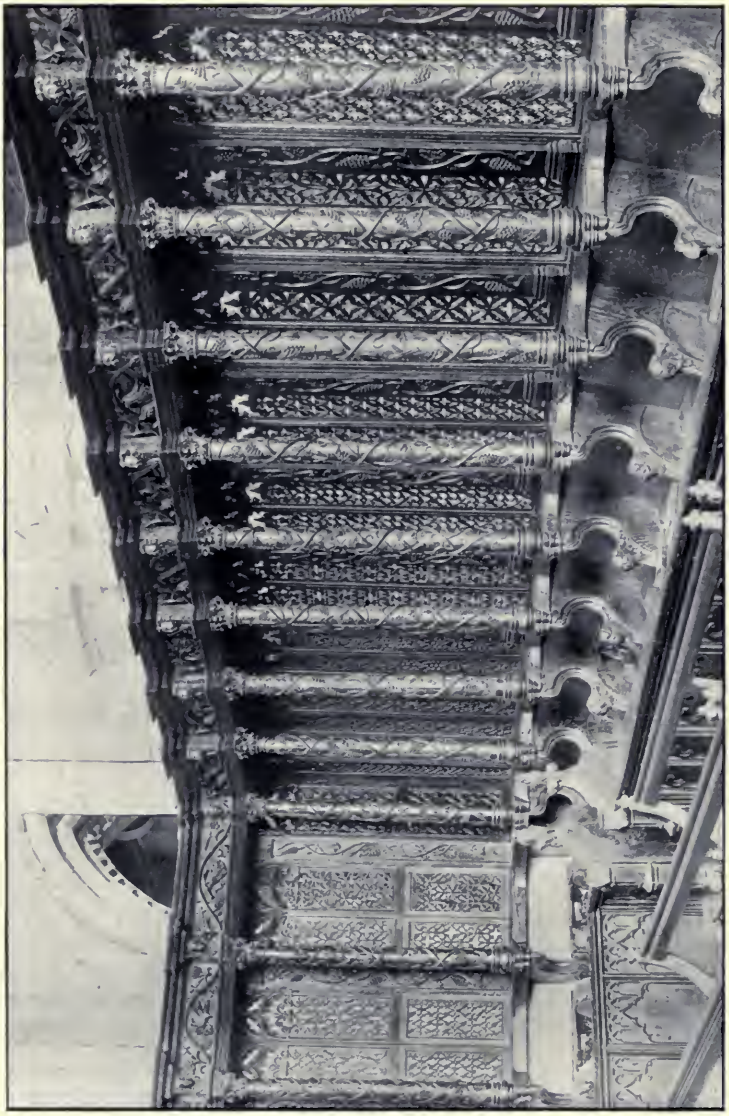
Cartmel was a priory church of Austin Priors, with an income at the Dissolution of £90, say £1,000. There are

* See also the illustration of the chair made *c.* 1545 for Dorothy Mainwaring, page 123.

† See Willis and Clark, i. 516-522.

‡ Gotch's *Early English Renaissance*, 29, 254.

§ *Annales Cartmelenses*, by James Stockdale; Ulverston, 1872, p. 76.



Cartmel

Cartmel

twenty-six stalls; above the doorways are inscriptions in gold letters from the Psalms. The architrave is supported by shafts which have Corinthian capitals, round which cling in delightful fashion delicate tendrils and fruit of the vine. On the shafts also are emblems of the Passion; in the illustrations may be recognised the cross, the ladder, the buffet, the pillar of scourging, the hammer and the nails. At the back is delicate tracery work, reminding one of the Gothic tracery of the screen of St Catharine's chapel in Carlisle cathedral. The whole design is full of grace and charm; above all in the delicate tendrils of the vine coiling round the shafts; one's first thought is to class it with the exquisite scrollwork of the churches of S. Maria dei Miracoli at Brescia and Venice, and with the work of the Italian artists in England in the time of Henry VIII. For as a rule, says Mr Gotch,* "with the close of the first half of the sixteenth century we come to the end of pronounced Italian detail such as pervades the tiles at Lacock abbey and characterises other isolated features in different parts of the country. The nature of the detail in the second half of the sixteenth century," and in the seventeenth century, "is different; it no longer comprises the dainty cherubs, the elegant balusters" (*cf.* the King's College stalls) "vases and candelabra, the buoyant dolphins and delicately modelled foliage which are associated with Italian and French Renaissance work, but indulges freely in strapwork curled and interlaced, in fruit and foliage, in cartouches and in caryatides half human beings, half pedestals, such as were the delight of the Dutchmen" who had superseded the Italian artists. In the Cartmel stalls the one feature which is pre-eminently Jacobean is to be seen in the character of the busts in the frieze; if they are compared with those at Christchurch (77), they are seen at once to be of seventeenth and not of sixteenth century design. Setting those aside, the design is purely that of the Early English Renaissance, as practised by Italian artists. It is one of the most remarkable examples of "survival" in design in the range of English art, and as beautiful as it is belated—a whole century behind the times.

In 1697 the choir of St Paul's cathedral was opened for public worship. The stalls differ considerably in type from those of Pre-Reformation days, as it was necessary to provide seats for the Lord Mayor and Corporation of London as well as closets at the back to accommodate the wives and families of the canons. By the removal of the western screen in the time of Dean Melvill, appointed 1856, the appearance of the choir has

* *Early Renaissance Architecture in England*, 38.

St Paul's Cathedral

been completely changed. The exquisite carvings of Grinling Gibbons, says Dean Milman,* are not merely admirable in themselves, but in perfect harmony with the character of the architecture. He even goes so far as to say that they rival, if they do not surpass, all mediæval works of their class in grace, variety and richness; and keep up an inimitable unison of the lines of the building and the decoration. In the words of Horace Walpole, "there is no instance of a man before Gibbons who gave to wood the loose and airy lightness of flowers, and changed together the various productions of the elements with a fine disorder natural to each species." It is doubtful whether Grinling Gibbons was of Dutch or English birth. He was discovered by Evelyn in a poor solitary thatched house near Sayes Court carving a Crucifixion after Tintoretto. In this piece more than a hundred figures were introduced; "nor was there anything in nature so tender and delicate as the flowers and festoons about it; and yet the work was strong." He asked Evelyn £100 for it. The frame, says Evelyn, was worth as much. Evelyn introduced "the incomparable young man" to the King and to Wren, and his fortune was made. Malcolm in his *Londinium Redivivum* calculates that the payments made to Gibbons for his work in St Paul's amounted altogether to £1,337. 7s. 5d.†

Space fails to tell of many noble examples of eighteenth century stallwork.‡ In spite of an enormous amount of destruction, *e.g.*, by the vandals in charge of Canterbury cathedral, much still remains and awaits the historian. A fine drawing of the stallwork put up in 1704 in Canterbury choir will be found in Dart's *Canterbury*. The throne, carved by Grinling Gibbons, was given by Archbishop Tenison; the pulpit, two of the stalls and other fittings by Queen Mary II.;§ all this has been swept away, except some pieces worked into the return stalls, to make way for stalls of the usual brand of Victorian Gothic.

* *Annals of St Paul's*, 447.

† Measured drawings of the stalls of St Paul's by Mr C. W. Baker appeared in the *Building News*, 1891, pages 108 and 358.

‡ The Renaissance woodwork ousted from Worcester cathedral by Sir Gilbert Scott found a resting-place in the church of Sutton Coldfield (R. A. D.).

§ Willis' *Canterbury Cathedral*, 107.

CHAPTER VI

STALLS IN PARISH CHURCHES

STALLS are found, but rarely with canopies, in many parochial, as well as in monastic, collegiate and cathedral churches. In the latter of course the object of them is obvious; they were intended to accommodate a large body of monks or canons with their vicars and the choristers. But they are found sometimes in the churches of quite small parishes, *e.g.*, Sall, Trunch, Ludham, Burlingham St Edmund's in Norfolk, Weston-in-Gordano, Somerset, Norton in Suffolk, Ivychurch* in Romney

Sall

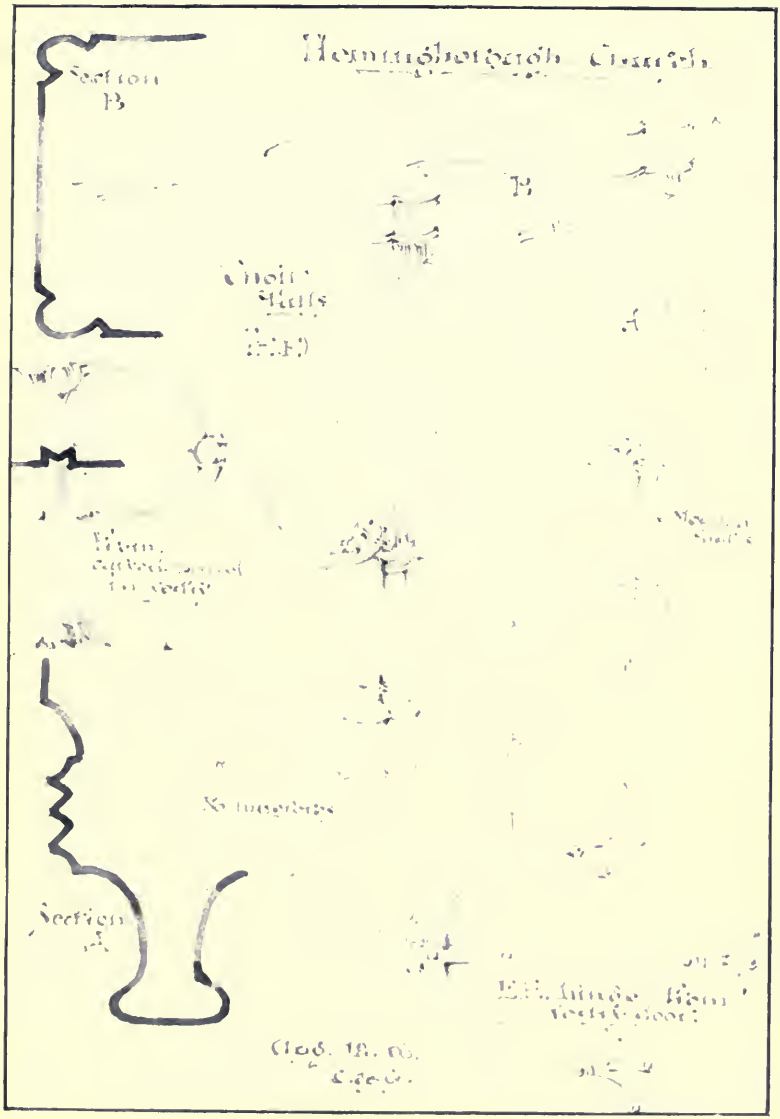
Trunch

Marsh, where it is pretty certain that in most cases the church was served by a single parish priest merely. At Ingham, a parish in the Norfolk Broads, there are ten stalls in the chancel; at Stowlangtoft, Suffolk, there are six stalls; and so with numerous others. How early parochial chancels had stalls is difficult to say. No existing examples are earlier than the thirteenth century. But a curious fact about the growth of our parish churches, to

* These are illustrated in *Archæologia Cantiana*, vol. xiii.

which attention has not hitherto been directed, may throw some light on the subject. In early Anglo-Saxon days the normal and most common type of parish church was one which had an aisleless nave and chancel. In early Norman days also this was the most common type. In all the above churches, whether Anglo-Saxon or Norman, the chancel, whether rectangular or apsidal, was quite small. Comparatively few, however, of these chancels remain small. In the vast majority of cases they have been enlarged. Either the old chancel has been retained but has been lengthened, or it has been broadened as well as lengthened, thus producing an entirely new chancel. In most cases it happened that, in the long history of the church, aisles were thrown out afterwards, or transepts, that later the nave was lengthened westwards and was heightened to accommodate clerestory windows, and still later a western tower was added and perhaps a spire. But the enlargement of the chancel sometimes took place without any of the other alterations, and where that is so, *i.e.*, where the church retains a comparatively small nave, the enlarged chancel bulks up very lofty and spacious, seemingly quite out of scale to the rest of the church: in some examples the chancel is actually loftier than the nave. A church with a chancel so disproportionate strikes the attention at once as one demanding explanation. Large numbers of such abnormally big chancels survive. In Kent and Sussex many of them are of the thirteenth century; *e.g.*, Littlebourne; while over England one is struck with the very large number of lofty and spacious chancels of the fourteenth century; *e.g.*, Norbury, Derbyshire; Oulton, Suffolk. In numerous cases the enlargements of the chancel took place more than once. At Boston the church was rebuilt with a fine chancel *c.* 1330; but by the end of the century even this vast chancel was judged inadequate, and it was extended still further to the east.

What then is the explanation of this furore for enlargement of chancels? In considering the answer, it must be borne in mind that, ritualistically, the English parish church was always tripartite; consisting of nave, choir and chancel. In churches of the Iffley type, *i.e.*, with a central tower, it was also architecturally tripartite. But even in churches which architecturally were bipartite, *i.e.*, which consisted merely of a nave and chancel, the chancel was divided into two parts, choir and sanctuary, the distinction between them being marked by a change of level. Which part then was it that was found inadequate, the sanctuary or the choir? Not the former; it was not then cumbered with altar rails; the purpose they serve nowadays was served by the screen which every church possessed, guarding the entrance to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the chancel; and the sanctuary was quite large enough for the celebrant at the Mass, with as a rule a solitary assistant, the parish clerk. It must have been the choir that was too small for the seats which it was desired to place in it. We conclude therefore that seats were common even in small village churches as early as the thirteenth century, if not before. Documentary evidence to that effect we have not. But in later days there is definite evidence as to the practice of putting stalls in the chancels of parish churches. In Hemingborough church, Yorkshire, there remain stalls of graceful thirteenth century design (87). Now this church in the thirteenth century was parochial; it did not become collegiate till 1426. A series of entries of the cost of choir stalls is preserved for the parish church of St Mary at Hill in the City of London. In the year 1426 there was "paid to three carpenters for the stalls of the quire, 20d." In the following year there was paid "for the stalls of the quire" the large sum of £12 (=£150); it would seem that it was about this time that a complete new set of stalls was put into the choir. In the same year, 1427, there was "paid for stalls in the quire, 16s. 6d."; and "for a quire stool, 7s. 10d." In 1501 a payment was made "for mending of desks in the quire"; in 1509 "for nails and mending of a bench in the quire, 1d." In 1523 there was "paid for a long desk for the quire, 3s."; in 1526 "for the stuff and making of a double desk in the quire, 5s." Then, in Protestant days, there was "paid for mending the desk and settles in the chancel, 2s." At this church the lower part of the bench was made to form a box or chest.

Who then sat in these stalls? The common theory is that they were intended for the use of the rector or vicar and the parish clerk, and of any chantry priests who might be attached to the church. This no doubt is true as far as it goes. At St Maurice, York, a complaint was made at the visitation in 1416 to the effect that the desks in the choir, viz., those where the parish chaplain and the parish clerk were wont to sit, are unhandsome and in need of repair: "Dicunt quod deski in choro, tam ex una parte quam ex alia, ubi saltem capellanus parochialis et clericus parochialis sedere usi sunt, nimis deformes et indigent reparacione."* To many churches also, but by no means to all, chantry endowments were made; *i.e.*, money was left that masses might be said for ever for the repose of the soul of the donor by a priest, other than the rector or vicar, specially appointed for that purpose. It is commonly supposed that these chantry priests were concerned only with the special altars

* *York Fabric Rolls*, 35, 248.

at which they ministered. But that this was not the case, at any rate universally, is apparent from the terms of the institution of the Willeby chantry in Halifax parish church. The deed is dated 10th June 1494. Amongst other regulations it contains the provision that the chaplain is to attend in person in the choir of the church on every Sunday and Holy Day in his surplice, at matins, mass and vespers, and to take his part in the reading and chanting, as directed by the vicar, and in accordance with

Hereford St Peter's

the constitutions of the Metropolitan Church. "Item volo et ordino quod predictus Tho. Gledhill, Capellanus modernus, et omnes alii Capellani, . . . temporibus futuris nominandi, singulis diebus dominicis et festivis personaliter sint presentes in choro ejusdem Ecclesie temporibus matutinarum missarum et vesperarum, suis suppeliciis induti, et legant et psallent, prout Vicario ejusdem Ecclesie pro tempore existenti decenter et congrue videbitur expedire, ut in constitutionibus Ecclesie Metropolitane proinde constitutis plenius liquet." Assuming

then that the same rule applied also to the incumbents of the other chantries, there would be a regular body of clergy to take part in the choir offices.*

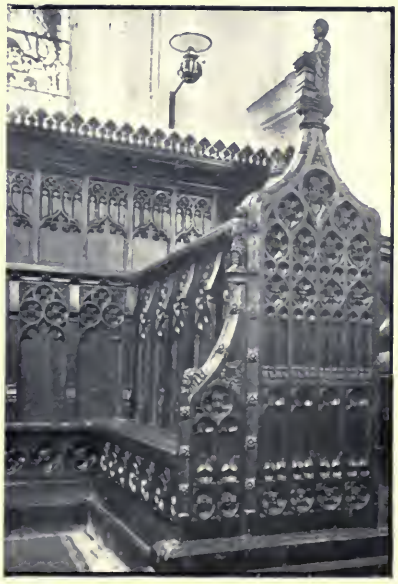
Instances might be multiplied to any extent of the obligation laid on chantry priests to attend and assist the rector or vicar in the services. Thus at Rothwell in 1494 the chantry priest attached to the altar of Our Lady was not only required by the foundation deed to celebrate Mass and other service daily at this altar, but was directed to be in the high choir all festival days at matins, Mass, and evensong. In 1505 Margaret Blade, widow, endowed a chantry of Our Lady in Kildewick parish for a priest who, in addition to his special duties, was to help Divine service in the choir and to help the curate in time of necessity.† Sometimes quite a considerable number of chantry priests were attached to a parish church. When all chantry endowments were confiscated by Edward VI., the loss of the services of the chantry priests was in many cases severely felt. At Nottingham indeed the parishioners of St Mary's made formal protest; stating that in their parish there were "1,400 houseling people and that the vicar there had no other priest to help but the two chantry priests."‡ We may take it therefore that seats in the chancel were required not only for the parish priest and the parish clerk, but in some cases for chantry priests as well.

But the above explanation does not cover the whole ground. There are often many more stalls than could be used as above. And in some churches there were no chantry priests at all, and yet there are stalls. Who else then occupied seats in the chancel? Some of the stalls probably, usually but a few, may have been occupied by laymen even so early as the thirteenth century.

As regards the occupancy of seats in the chancel it is quite clear that it has always been the wish of the Church that they should be reserved for the clergy and that no laymen should be admitted. It is equally clear that the Church has never been able to carry out the injunction. In the Trullan Council of 683 or 692 it was laid down, "Nulli omnium liceat, qui quidem sit in laicorum numero, intra septa sacri altaris ingredi, nequaquam tamen ab eo prohibita potestate et auctoritate imperiali, quandoquidem voluerit Creatori dona offerre, ex antiquissima traditione"; *i.e.*, "No layman may enter the chancel, except the Emperor, who by venerable tradition is allowed to do so when he wishes to present offerings to his Maker." But this does not

* Canon Savage's pamphlet, 369.
† Cutts' *Parish Priests*, 466.
‡ Gasquet's *Parish Life in Mediæval England*, 96.

explicitly allow the Emperor to sit down in the chancel. And even this much was objected to by many; for a gloss follows: "Nemo liceat laico intra, &c." . . . "Adulatione et timore victi, per gravem errorem concedunt imperatori, quod magna cum laude sanctorum patrum Ambrosius Theodosio negavit"; *i.e.*, "The permission given to the Emperor was given under the influence of adulation and timidity, and the action of St Ambrose in refusing it to the Emperor Theodosius was greatly applauded by the Fathers." But it was a perilous thing to exclude emperors, and what was conceded to emperors was claimed by princes, and what was conceded to princes was claimed by and had to be conceded to the nobility generally. So in Scotland in 1225 by an episcopal order the King and his nobles also were allowed to stand and to sit in the chancel: "Ne laici secus altare, quum sacra mysteria celebrantur, stare vel sedere inter clericos presumant, excepto domino rege et majoribus regni, quibus propter suam excellentiam in hac parte duximus referendum." And if the nobles, then certainly the patron of the living could not be excluded from a parochial chancel. So in the diocese of Worcester in 1240 a canon was agreed to that patrons as well as high personages might stand in the chancel: "nec laici stent in Cancellis dum celebrantur divina; salva tamen reverentia patronorum et sublimium personarum"; in Lincoln diocese also Bishop Grosstête in 1240 restricts the permission to the patron. Again in 1255 in Lincoln diocese the patron or any other "venerable" person was allowed to sit and stand in the chancel. Archbishop Greenfield of York (1304-1315) found it necessary to make a rule against laymen intruding into the choir during service. So also at Ely, Simon Langham in 1364 wrote: "Lay people are not to stand or sit amongst the clerks in the chancel during the celebration of divine service, unless



Stow Langtoft

it be done to shew respect or for some other reasonable and obvious reason; but this is allowed for the patrons of churches only."* Then what had been claimed successfully by those of noble birth, and by patrons in particular, was claimed with equal success by any good Churchman of consideration and wealth, especially if he were a benefactor of the church. For in the fourteenth century Alan de Alnewyk of York, goldsmith, wills that his body be buried *in the quire* of St Michael Belfry near the place *where I used to sit* ("ubi sedere solebam"). Another century later, Robert Constable of Bossall, leaves this direction in 1454: "First, I devise my soul to God Almighty and his mother Blessed Saint Mary and to Saint Botolph and to the holy court of heaven; and my body to be buried in the quire afore the place *where my seat is*."† In 1511 Robert Fabyan, the chronicler, citizen and draper of London, devises as follows: "I will that my corps be buried between my pew and the high altar, *within the quire* of the church of Allhallows, Theydon Gardon, Essex." Finally, at Yatton, Somerset, in 1529, 2s. was "paid for a sege in ye chaunsell."‡ It is to be remembered moreover that though it may have been unusual for laymen to have seats in the chancel, yet it was by no means uncommon for them to stand or kneel there; there are enough representations of laymen so standing to establish that point satisfactorily: they are shewn standing or kneeling, sometimes with lighted tapers in their hands. At a St Martin's mass in France in the fourteenth century,§ two women are shewn near the altar steps, one standing and attending to her duties, the other inattentive and seriously distracting the attention of an acolyte kneeling near. We know definitely that in Salisbury cathedral laymen were allowed to be present in the sanctuary before the Sunday procession; for after the hallowing of the water it was ordered that the priest should asperge the laity in the presbytery as well as the clergy in the choir. "Post aspersionem clericorum laicos in presbiterio hinc inde stantes aspergat."‖ At Salisbury the Sunday procession was marshalled in the ample space between the choir and the high altar, which space the laity entered in order to follow the clerks in the procession.

For women it was more difficult to get admission to the

* Gasquet, *Parish Life in Mediæval England*, 45.

† It is of course possible that both Alan de Alnewyk and Robert Constable sat in the chancel in surplice either as a member of a gild or of the choir.

‡ This, however, may have been for one of the choirmen or choristers.

§ Reproduced in Gasquet, *ibid.*, 47, from Didron.

‖ Wordsworth's *Salisbury Ceremonies and Processions*, 20.

chancel. Tradition and usage were against them. As early as A.D. 367 the Council of Laodicea passed a canon that women ought not to come near the altar or enter the apartment where the altar stands. In the ninth century a canon was passed at Mantes that women must not approach the altar or act as "server" to the celebrant or stand in the chancel. Among the canons of the time of King Edgar is one: "Docemus ut altari mulier

Brancepeth

non appropinquet dum Missa celebratur"; "a woman must not come near the altar at Mass." In laying down regulations for the services in Ripon Minster Archbishop Greenfield says, "We permit no women at all, religious or secular, unless great ladies or ladies of high rank or others of approved honour and piety, to sit or stand in a stall or elsewhere in the choir while the divine offices are being celebrated." "Nullas omnino mulieres, religiosas vel seculares, nec laicos nisi magnas aut nobiles

personas aut alias quarum sit honestas et devocio satis nota, in stallo vel alibi in choro inter ministros ecclesiae stare vel sedere dum divina celebrantur officia permittimus." * The story told about Sir Thomas More shews that while he himself sat in the chancel, Lady More sat in the nave. "During his high Chancellorship one of his gentlemen, when service at the church was done, ordinarily used to come to my Lady his wife's pew-door and say unto her 'Madame, my Lord is gone.' But the next holy day after the surrender of his office of Lord Chancellor, and the departure of his gentlemen from him, he came unto my Lady his wife's pew himself, and, making a low courtesy, said unto her, 'Madam, my Lord is gone.' But she, thinking this at first to be but one of his jokes, was little moved, till he told her sadly he had given up the Great Seal." And many other good Churchmen at all times have retained the ancient usage of the exclusion of women from the stalls in the chancel. At Great Burstead, in Essex, in 1661, an applicant was authorised to build a pew at the entrance to the chancel for the use of himself and sons and companions and friends of the male sex; but to build another in the nave for his wife and her daughters and companions and friends of the female sex. King Charles I. in 1625 wrote, "For mine own particular opinion I do not think . . . that Women should be allowed to sit in the chancel, which was instituted for Clerks"; and in 1633, when he visited Durham cathedral, the choir was cleared of all the seats occupied by the Mayor and Corporation and the wives of the Dean and Prebendaries and other "women of quality," and his Majesty gave orders that they should never again be erected, "that so the Quire may ever remain in its ancient beauty." Even to this day in some cathedrals it is the usage to allow women to sit only in the lower desks of the choir and not in the stalls above. Nevertheless in plenty of instances the pertinacity of women prevailed; and where the husband sat in the chancel, there the wife insisted on sitting beside him. Thus in a suit instituted by Lady Wyche in 1468, the lady put it on record that she had a seat in the chancel: "jeo aye un lieu de seer en le chauncel." In 1468 two ladies had seats in the chancel of Rotherham church; for the master of the grammar school willed that he be buried in south chancel † near the stall in which the wife of the Bailiff of Rotherham and the testator's wife sit. In 1553 a new pew was made for Sir Arthur D'Arcy and his wife at St Botolph, Aldgate: "Paid to Mattram, carpenter, for three elm

* Inhibitions of Archbishop William of York in 1308 and 1312 in Rev. Dr Fowler's *Memorials of Ripon Minster*, Surtees Society, vol. 78.

† "South chancel" may mean "the chapel south of the chancel."

boards for the two new pews in the quire where Sir Arthur Darsey and his wife are set . . . ijs. viijd." The same parish in 1587 gave Master Dove permission to "build a pew for himself, another for his wife to sit in, being in the chancel." Therefore we come to the conclusion that at any rate from the thirteenth century onward more and more seats were provided in the chancel for lay folk. Where, as in the parish church of Boston, the stalls are very numerous—at Boston there are sixty-four—it is likely that a considerable number of them were appropriated to various important gilds connected with the church.

But there is another purpose which parochial stalls subserved, and that is the most important of all: viz., to accommodate a surpliced choir. The introduction of surpliced choirs into chancels in modern days was an innovation at first deeply resented, and seems to have been usually made in ignorance of the existence of mediæval precedent. Precedent there is, however, in abundance. England was a merry, tuneful land before the Reformation, and nowhere more than in the churches. The musical part of the service grew more and more ornate, especially in the last years immediately preceding the Dissolution; the parishes—village and town parishes alike—delighted in "the cheerful noise of organs and fiddles and anthems," and spent on music a very large part of the church income. The early years of the sixteenth century were a glorious time for church music; the parishioners loved it and would have it, and were willing to pay for it; it was not forced on them from above; it was the people and the people's churchwardens who would have it. What a joyful sound we should hear from the church doors if we could enter once more an English church of the sixteenth century and hear the surpliced men and boys a singing in the choir, accompanied by organs and citterns and fiddles and crowdes and dulcimers and all instruments of music in the rood loft, with perhaps an anthem or a solo on high festival days from distinguished vocalists of the neighbouring villages; those were happy times. Take the churchwardens' accounts of St Mary at Hill, London.* In this church in 1523 there was "paid 15d. for 6 round mats of wicker for the clerks." If we assume six more for the boys, we get a regular choir of six men and six boys. But besides these an extra choir of choirmen and boys was engaged for special days. In 1527 there was "paid 9d. at the Sun tavern for the drinking of Mr Colmas and others of the King's chapel

* Admirably edited by Mr Littlehales for the Early English Text Society; vols. 20 and 24.

that had sung in the church of St Mary at Hill." In 1553 there was "paid 16d. to the gentlemen of the Queen's chapel for singing a mass at St Mary at Hill." Again, in 1527 there was "paid 7s. for bread, ale and wine for the quire, and for strangers at divers feasts in the year past"; these "strangers" would probably be singers hired from other churches. The above entry shews that the choir was paid in kind as well as in money. The choirmen received quite handsome salaries. In 1524 Morres, the bass, was receiving from the parish 20 nobles a year. John Hobbes was the most expensive member of the choir. In 1556 there was paid to John Hobbes 56s. 8d., being one quarter's wages, for his services in the choir. This choirman therefore had a salary of £11. 6s. 8d. per annum, which would be equivalent to about £113 of our money. Sir John Parkyns, a bass, received a quarterly salary of 15s. 8d. "for the help the quire when Hobbes was dead, and to have 8d. a day every holy day and Sunday." On the other hand there was "paid 12s. to Mr Hilton, priest, for three quarters of a year, for keeping daily service in the quire in 1528"; this was at the rate of 16s. per annum; this compares remarkably with John Hobbes' salary of £11. 6s. 8d. per annum; even allowing for the fact that Mr Hilton had other sources of revenue, we cannot but infer that priests were cheap and good singers dear in the sixteenth century. The parishes were quite willing to pay for good music. At Braunton, Devon, *c.* 1580, *i.e.*, after the Reformation, the churchwardens were still paying four or five expensive choirmen, as well as singing boys; the highest salary for a choirman was 26s. 8d.; say £13. 6s. 8d. per annum; the choir in this village church could not have cost the parish less than £100 per annum of our money. In all the choirs there seem to have been "singing boys" as well as men. We hear in 1477 of four choristers being brought over to St Mary at Hill for a special service, for which they received the modest sum of 1d. each. At this church it was finally arranged to have a permanent choir, and what we should call a choir school was established, with John Norfolk, the organist, at the head of it to train the boys: for there "was paid for making clean of a chamber in the Abbot's Inn to be a school for Norfolk's children." The same year "Mr parson gave the boys a playing week to make merry," and the churchwardens kindly presented the boys and choirmen with 3s. 4d. to spend on their holiday. Next year there was again a payment of 3s. 4d. "in the playing week after Christmas to disport them." Both the boys and the men wore surplices, bought at the expense of the parish. In 1496 there were at St Mary at Hill "8 surplices for the quire, of which

2 have no sleeves; and 7 rochets for children, and 6 albs for children." In 1499 there was "paid 12d. for the making of 6 rochets for children that were in the quire." At St Nicholas', Bristol, in 1521 there was paid "1d. for making a child's surplice belonging to the quire"; and in 1542 iiis. viid. for material "to make 2 lads' surplices." An inventory of Huntingfield church, Suffolk, shews that the church possessed "vii rochettys ffor men and vii for chyldern," and that the material of the rochets cost 6d. each; it would seem that this Suffolk village had seven men and seven boys in the church choir. At St Mary at Hill there was paid in 1523 "for making 12 surplices for men at 6d. each, 6s.; and for 12 surplices for children at 5d. each, 5s."; this was a rich city parish, and could afford to have a pair for each choir man and boy, one to be in use, the other at the wash. Then music had to be paid for. In the same church in 1523 there was paid "for 4 hymnals and a processioner, noted, for the clerks in the quire, 6s. 8d."; in the same year there was paid "for two quires of paper to prick songs in, 8d." In 1555 at St Mary the Great, Cambridge, there was "paid 3s. 4d. for the copy of the service in English set out by note; and 1s. 4d. for writing and noting part of it to sing on both sides of the quire"; *i.e.*, they sang antiphonally. There are numerous entries as to the cost of the organ and of the constant repairs which it required. Lastly, there was the organist's salary, which if it was anything like the sum received by John Hobbes, would be a heavy item. An eminent organist like John Norfolk, who was in charge of a choir school, would expect and no doubt get a large salary. In village churches, however, the boys would be trained, sometimes by a chantry priest if he was under statutory obligation to do so, more often by the parish clerk. The latter was a permanent official with a freehold, as he is still, and a person of much importance and dignity. Before the Reformation, in addition to serving at the daily Mass in a village church, carrying holy water and "blessed bread" round the parish, and many other functions, he was more especially in charge of the musical part of the services. He was expected to sing or chant himself, especially the psalms; he had to read the epistles; and, at any rate in the sixteenth century, he had to train the choir boys. It was ordered at Faversham in 1506 that "the clerks, or one of them, so much as in them is, shall endeavour themselves to teach children to read and sing in the quire." And at St Giles', Reading, in 1544 there was a payment of 12s. "to Whitborne the clerk towards his wages, and he to be bound to teach 2 children for the quire." Beside the professional choirmen and the parish clerks there were sometimes amateurs also giving

help. Sir Thomas More used to sing in Chelsea church like any parish clerk. "God's body," said the Duke of Norfolk, coming on a time to Chelsea and finding him in Chelsea church, singing at Mass in the choir, "God's body, my Lord Chancellor, what turned parish clerk?" Put these items together—the wages of choirmen and boys, and now and then of extra help, the making, mending and washing of surplices, the cost of music, the salaries of the organist and parish clerk and the cost of the choir school, and it will be seen that the services of a large town church must have been, musically, on quite a grand scale; it is equally plain

Hambleton

that the love of church music and the willingness to pay for it were equally great in the villages. It is not possible here to go further into this matter of the church music. It may be said briefly, however, that the plain chant of the Divine Office and of the Mass would be sung in the chancel, and that for this the permanent village choir of men and boys would suffice. Every parish that could afford it seems to have had a rood loft and an organ in it. But the organ would not be used to accompany the plain song, but for what we call "voluntaries" in the various intervals of the Mass and other services. The

organ again would be employed when there was singing of "motets," *i.e.*, anthems, whether the singers were in the choir or the rood loft. On great days when minstrels playing all manner of instruments were got together to help out the organ, they would no doubt be placed in the rood loft, with any extra vocalists for whom place could not be found in the choir below.

Summing up, we may say that in a parochial chancel seats were required (1) for the parish priest, the parish clerk and any chaplains or chantry priests; (2) for the patron and a few of the leading churchfolk of the village; (3) for a choir of men

Chaddesden

and boys which was occasionally enlarged by choirmen and choristers borrowed from neighbouring churches. Altogether quite a considerable number of seats would be required; and we need not be surprised that there are so many stalls in small village churches, but rather that they are not more; no doubt, however, additional forms or benches would be introduced on days of great festival.

Not every parish church could afford to have a set of stalls made, cathedral fashion, for its chancel. In many cases probably the seats were but benches or settles; and the naked, desolate

look of many spacious chancels is no doubt due to the removal of these seats. Desks, or as they were Latinised "deski," there must have been, at least one at each side, on which to place the anthem book, processioner and other music. We hear of a double desk at St Mary at Hill; but only the richest parishes seem to have provided desks for the choir boys as well as for the men. In poor parishes the men had not armed stalls, but merely a bench to sit on.* The boys sometimes had a bench; sometimes, as at Stowlangtoft, Suffolk (91), the bench was framed into the desk behind. At the back of the choirmen's seats, there might be bare wall; or it might be panelled, as at Sall, Norfolk (85), or arcaded, as at Chichester Cathedral (36). In richer examples there might be above the panelling a coved cornice, as at Stowlangtoft and Balsham, Cambridge (3). A still more sumptuous design was to erect a horizontal canopy above the stalls, as at St Peter's (89) and All Saints' (45), Hereford, and Brancepeth, John Cosin's church, Durham (93). The return stalls, facing east, would be those of the parish priest and his clerical helpers, and were often more spacious and lofty than the rest, and backed on to the screen, as at Chaddesden, Derbyshire (99), and Trunch, Norfolk (85).

The workmanship of the best stalls is quite first rate. At All Saints', Hereford, the timber of the stalls is "good sound English oak, all either cleft or cut in the quarter, proving that the trees were converted into the smallest possible sizes before being sawn from either end, the very rough saw-kerfs meeting at an angle in the centre of the board."† The stalls frequently stand on stone plinths, pierced for ventilation; *e.g.*, at Sall and Trunch (85).

* At Hambleton (98) the chancel was remodelled, and the simple desks with linen pattern may be of that date. But the seats behind were never more than rough movable benches.—G. H. P.

† R. H. Murray on *Ancient Church Fittings*, 12.

PART II

CHAPTER VII

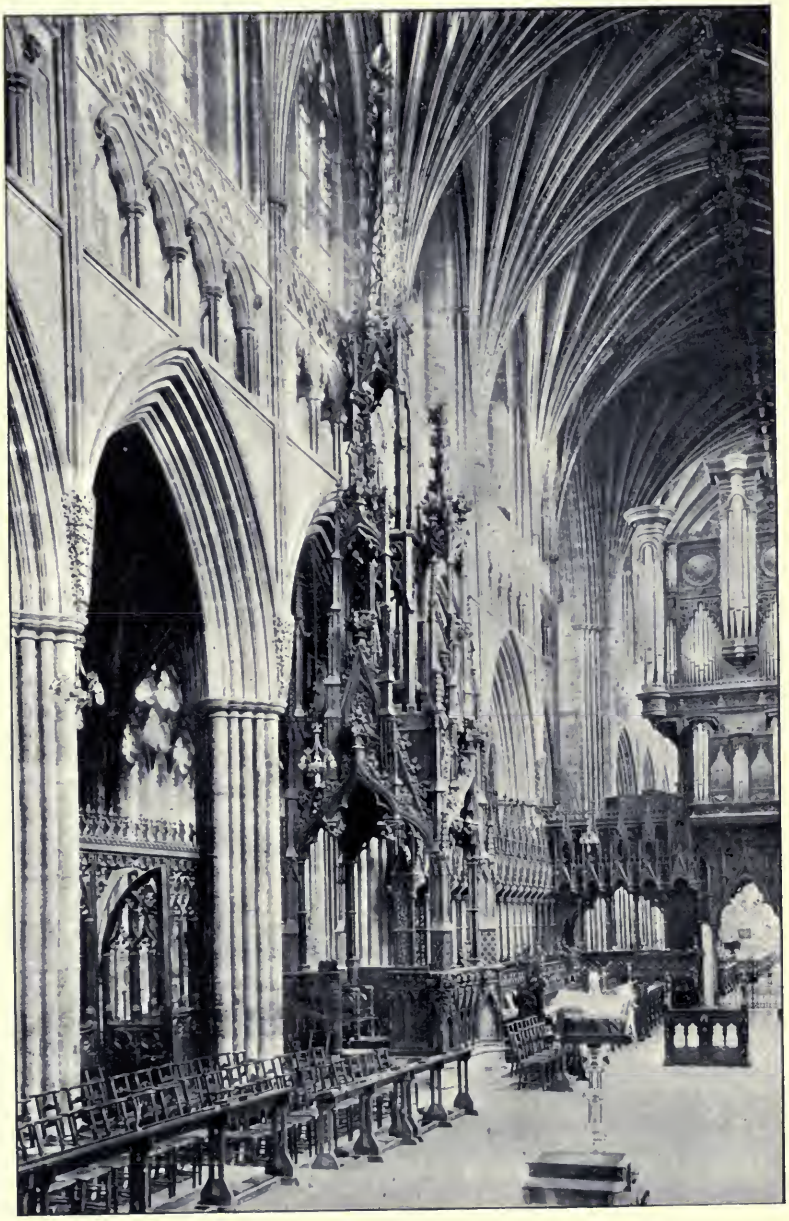
BISHOPS' THRONES

In the next chapter we deal with movable chairs and thrones, descendants more or less of the "*sella curulis*" and the "*sella gestatoria*." More important still are the fixed thrones of Early Christian days. These were not of wood or ivory, but of masonry, usually marble. In shape they were just high-backed chairs of marble. Now countless numbers of such marble chairs or stalls were in use in the theatres, thermæ and amphitheatres of Pagan Rome; the thermæ of Caracalla alone possessed 600 such marble stalls. Doubtless many a bishop's throne, like those at St John Lateran, St Clement and Cosmedin, Rome, was actually taken from one of the Roman thermæ. Similar bishops' chairs, cut out of the solid rock, occur in the catacombs of Rome.

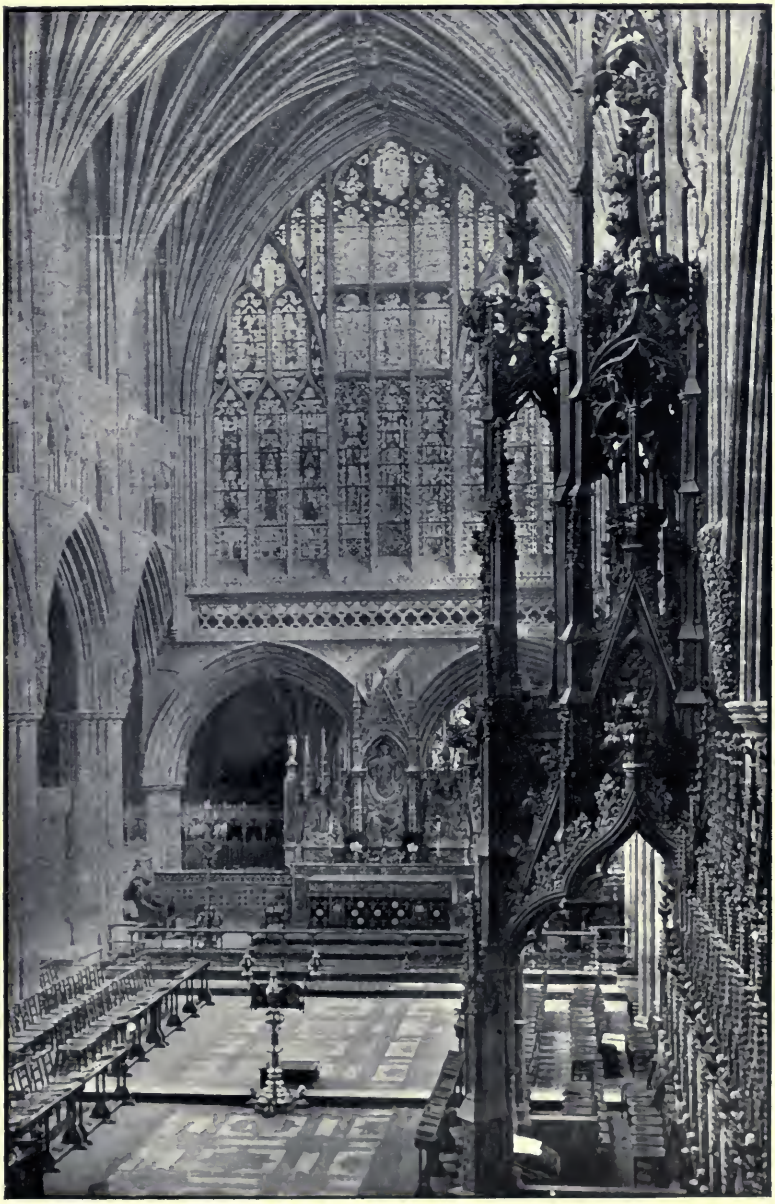
The position of the fixed marble throne of an Early Christian bishop was high up in the centre of the back wall of the apse of the church.

In Dalmatia and Istria several thrones retain their original position. At Parenzo there remains the semicircle of marble seats for the clergy with the episcopal throne in the centre; a work of the first half of the sixth century. At Aquileia, in the centre of the east end, is the Patriarch's throne of veined white marble, inlaid with serpentine; it is made up of portions of an older throne of genuine Byzantine work. At Grado the marble throne at the east end of the church seems to have been made up in the ninth century; it is surmounted by a stone tester. At Zara in the same position is another marble chair, raised on five steps. At Trau the bench of the clergy remains, but the bishop's throne has been destroyed. At Ossero also is a marble throne made up of fragments of older work.* In the apse of the twelfth century church of S. Stefano, Bologna, is a bishop's throne ten steps above the choir. Another remains *in situ* in Vaison cathedral, Provence. Another episcopal chair of marble

* Mr T. Graham Jackson's *Dalmatia*: iii. 319, 427, 105; i. 272 and ii 123.



Exeter



Exeter

is now placed on the north side of the sanctuary of Avignon cathedral; on it are carved the emblems of the Evangelists (104). In the Victoria and Albert Museum is a throne, painted and gilded, dated 1779, from a church in Cyprus. In Norwich cathedral in the centre of the apse wall of the presbytery there are the fragments of the original stone seat built for the use of the bishop, and on the pavement and adjoining piers there are traces of the steps by which his throne was reached. When Blomfield wrote his *History of Norfolk*, 1739-1775, the steps of the throne had not been disturbed; "the ancient bishop's throne ascended by three steps," and when built, before a rood screen was erected, the bishop had an uninterrupted view down the whole church to the west end of the nave.*

Avignon

In Canterbury cathedral is a stone chair, which as at Norwich was originally at the back of the High altar; it was removed from that position by Archbishop Howley *c.* 1840, but has recently been replaced; it consists of three blocks of Purbeck marble (105). The chronicler Eadmer, writing of the Pre-Conquest cathedral burnt down in 1067, says that "the pontifical chair in it was constructed with handsome workmanship and of large stones and cement." The description would apply very well to the present chair: but the monk Gervase states that in Lanfranc's cathedral, finished in 1077, "the patriarchal seat, on which the archbishops were wont to sit during the solemnities of the Mass, until the consecration of the Sacrament, was of a single stone." It would seem therefore that the Anglo-Saxon chair perished in the fire of 1067, and that its successor experienced the same fate in 1174. The probability is therefore that the present chair was made between the fire of 1174

* Stewart in *Archæological Journal*, xxxii. 18.

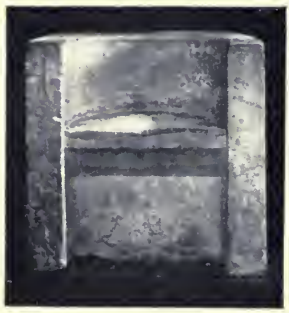
and the consecration of 1184. A decisive argument against a Pre-Conquest date is the fact that the throne is made of Purbeck marble—for this material seems not to have come into use till after the middle of the twelfth century in the Norman house at Christchurch on the Avon, in St Cross', Winchester, and in William of Sens' work at Canterbury. The position of the pontifical throne at Canterbury has varied at different periods. Eadmer states that the cathedral burnt down in 1067 was orientated to the east, where was the presbytery containing the High altar. But at the west end of the church was the altar of Our Lady, and behind this altar was the throne adjoining the west wall. This unusual position is only explicable by the assumption that the first cathedral at Canterbury was orientated to the west, and that the site occupied in 1067 by the altar of Our Lady was originally that of the High altar. The western position so postulated for the High altar and the throne was originally that of most of the Early Christian basilicas at Rome, in particular the ancient basilica of St Peter. At a later period the orientation was often reversed, *e.g.*, in St Paul *extra muros*, Rome; what happened in this latter church seems also to have happened in Anglo-Saxon times at Canterbury. A similar change has occurred in the French cathedral of Nevers; where, however, though in Gothic days a presbytery and High altar were constructed at the east end of the church, the early

Canterbury

Romanesque presbytery, crypt, and two bays of the nave have been allowed to remain to this day.

What looks like a survival of the marble chair of the bishop is to be seen in the frithstols of Hexham and Beverley (106). These also are of masonry, and are so similar in design to the ancient marble thrones that one is tempted to speculate that the original usage of sanctuary was for the offender to fly to and occupy the actual throne of the bishop or archbishop.

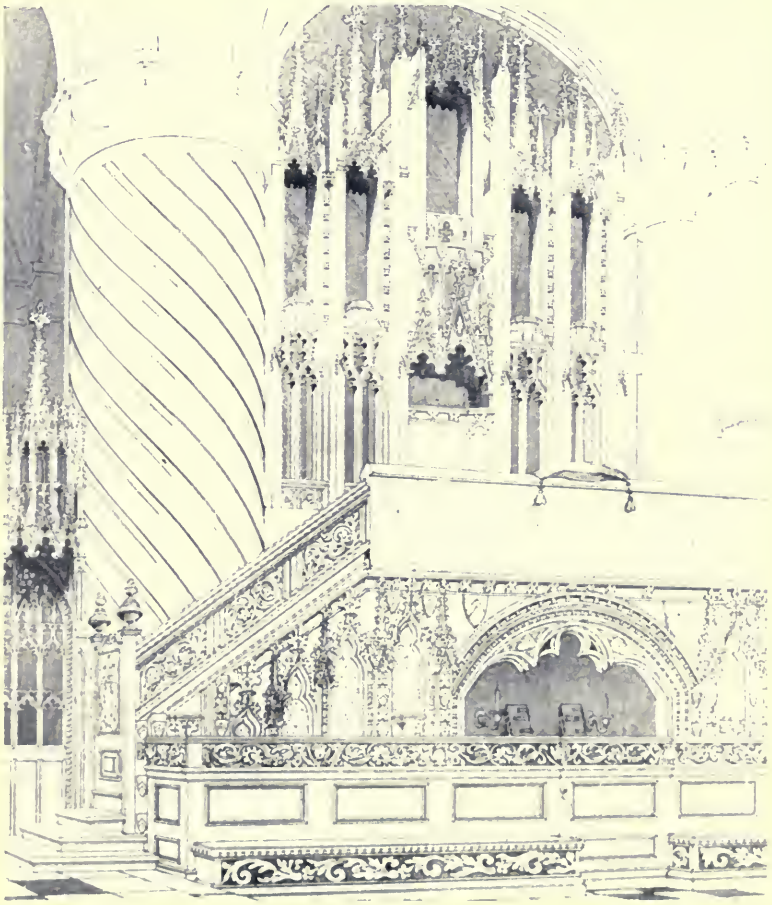
As has been said, in the Early Christian churches both the altar and the seats of the bishop and his clergy were usually at the west end of the church to the west of the High altar, so that the clergy faced towards the east, while the congregation faced towards the west. But early examples occur of churches with the modern orientation. When this was the case, the congregation faced east; and where the ancient position of the throne and benches was retained, the clergy were left in an anomalous position facing west. This led, first to the clergy, then the bishop, migrating elsewhere. The higher clergy took up their position in the return stalls of the choir, facing east; the lower clergy occupied stalls north and south of the choir. As for the bishop, he could not seat himself as before, facing the altar, for his throne would have blocked the entrance into the presbytery. He therefore set up his throne on the south side of the choir, at the eastern end of the southern range of stalls. And this is where we find him in Gothic days. There is one chief exception. In cathedrals served by monks, the bishop was the titular abbot of the house, though the superintendence of the monastery had necessarily to be left mainly in the hands of the prior; and so to this day in some churches the bishop has no throne, but occupies the ancient abbot's stall—at Ely the stall of the Benedictine abbot, at Carlisle the stall of the Augustinian abbot.



Beverley Minster

The change of position from the back of the High altar to the front of it was a complete break with tradition. Equally complete was the break in design. In the design of the Gothic throne there is no reminiscence whatever of the marble chairs of the Early Christian basilicas and the Pagan Thermæ. The Gothic thrones are but glorified versions of such stalls and spirelet-tabernacles as those of Lincoln; they are spacious stalls,

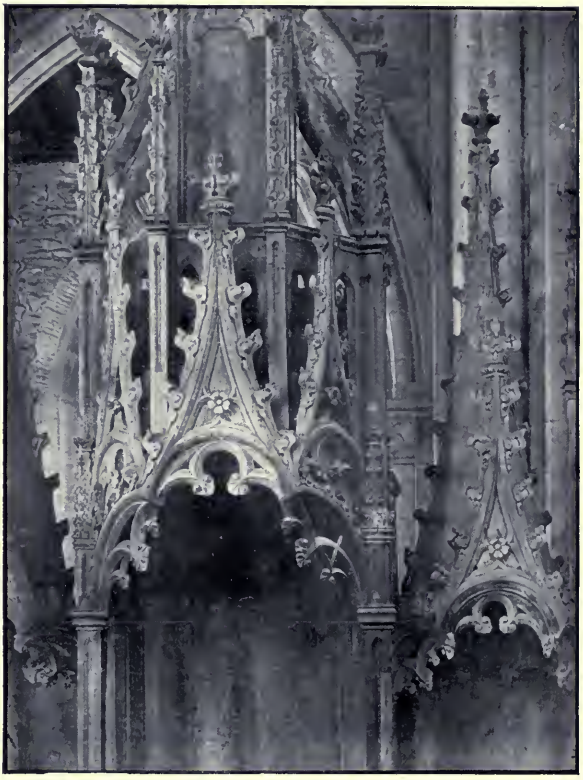
sometimes, as at St David's, big enough to hold a bishop and two chaplains, and crowned with a spire of open woodwork. The earliest and grandest is that of Exeter cathedral; the Fabric Rolls shew that in 1312 during the episcopate of Bishop



Durham

Stapledon there was paid "for timber for the bishop's seat £6. 12s. 8½d." The oak was kept four years before it was used. Then £4 was paid to Robert de Galmeton "for making the bishop's seat by contract." There was also a charge of 30s. for

painting, and there must have been one for carving the statues in the canopy. The whole cost would be about £13; say £200 in our money; a sum surprisingly small for work of such magnitude and delicate detail. The throne was evidently intended to have a chair placed under it, and probably seats for the bishop's chaplains to the right and left. It is 57 feet high;



St David's

at present its niches look somewhat unsubstantial and meagre; but that is because all the niches were tenanted with statues, and all have disappeared. The carved foliage is of exceptional excellence, and the corners of the pinnacles are occupied with small heads of oxen, sheep, dogs, pigs, monkeys and other animals (102).

Not much later is the throne in Hereford cathedral. That

St David's

at Wells is fifteenth century work, and by a pretty fancy of the "restorers" its tracery is filled with modern plate glass, and the door is a solid swinging stone! That at St David's is nearly 30 feet high. Of the throne erected by Bishop Gower *c.* 1342 there remains *in situ* only the low partition surrounding it; the present throne was probably put up by Bishop Morgan between 1496 and 1504 (109).*

The throne at Durham is of masonry, and in two parts of different dates. The lower portion contains an altar tomb surmounted by a recumbent effigy of the bishop in richly worked robes beneath a rich lierne vault. No doubt Bishop Hatfield as usual put this up during his lifetime; he was bishop from 1345 to 1381. This lower part is an exquisite example of the design in vogue before the advent of the Black Death of 1349-50. On the tomb is the pulpit, which bears unmistakable marks of the change of style which became general after 1350. The drawing shews the throne as it was in 1843 (107).

* Jones and Freeman's *St David's*, 90-93.

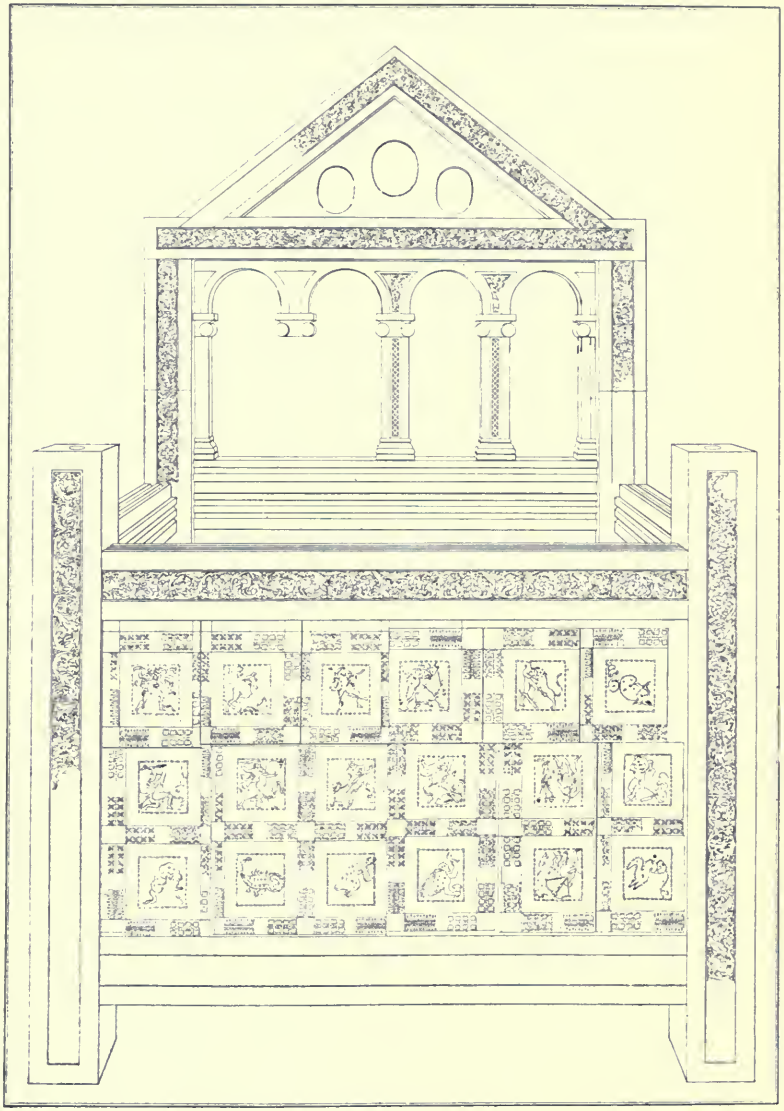
CHAPTER VIII

CHAIRS IN CHURCHES

HARDLY anything in a cathedral has so venerable a history as the throne and chair of the Bishop, of wood or ivory. The origin of this type of Bishop's chair goes back to Pagan Rome. There the greater officials had two official chairs, both portable; one, the "*sella curulis*," in which they sat while administering justice; the other, the "*sella gestatoria*," in which they were carried in procession. The "*sella curulis*" was a folding chair with crossed legs like the chair of Dagobert in the Hotel Cluny, Paris: chairs of this form are still in use in many Continental cathedrals.

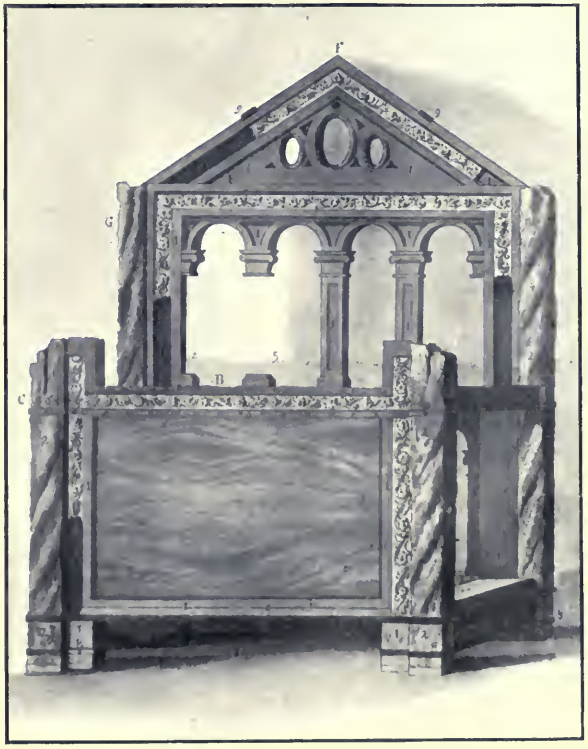
The "*sella gestatoria*" was a kind of sedan chair, shaped like a settle; with high back and usually without arms; it was provided with rings through which were passed staves when it was borne in procession. Similar is the Pope's chair in St Peter's, Rome, last shewn in 1867 (112). It is said to have belonged to the Senator Pudens and to have been used by St Peter. Whether that be so or not, it is undoubtedly very ancient, and its legs may be of the Apostolic age; they are of yellow oak, worm-eaten, and chipped by pilgrims who carried away bits as relics; the seat and back are of acacia wood and are of a later period. This back is ornamented with ivory panels carved to represent the Labours of Hercules; the panels are probably of the ninth century, for among the decorations is a bust with a crown bearing *fleurs de lis*, and what seems to be a portrait of Charles the Bald.* Very similar is the chair in which St Silvester is represented as seated in the dome of the apse of St John Lateran, where the mosaics are those of 1291, copied probably from the original ones executed in 428. Similar chairs also appear in the mosaics of Sta. Pudentiana and other Roman basilicas, and in those of Santa Sophia, Constantinople.

* Padre Garrucci in *Proceedings of Society of Antiquaries*, iv. 40, and illustrations in *Vetusta Monumenta*, vol. vi. The perspective sketch is by Carlo Fontana and is in the Royal Library at Windsor; the measured drawing is by Signor S. A. Scardonelli, and was made in 1784.



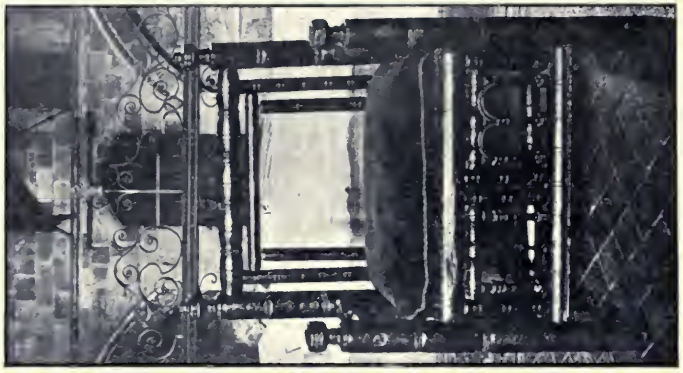
Pope's Chair

In the Archbishop's chapel at Ravenna is preserved a chair made for Maximian who was Archbishop of Ravenna from 546 to 556. It is in wood entirely covered with plaques of ivory, arranged in panels, with Scriptural subjects—among others the story of Joseph—and figures of saints richly carved in high relief. The plaques have borders with foliated ornaments, birds and animals, flowers and fruit, filling the spandrels.



Pope's Chair

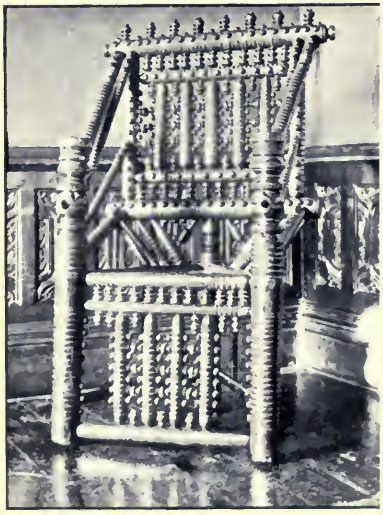
At Lincoln is a wooden chair, which appears to be *c.* 1300; it has recently been placed in the Chapter House and is now used by the bishop at diocesan synods (114). It is possible that since several Parliaments met at Lincoln, between 1265 and 1327, that this may be the royal chair: it may well have been used also at the great trial of the Knights Templars, which was held in the Chapter House in 1310. It is only original up



Hereford Cathedral

Lincoln

to the level of the arms; the lions, the back and the canopy are modern. In Hereford cathedral is an ancient wooden chair, once coloured in red and gold; it is composed of fifty-three pieces; not counting the seat of two boards and the two circular heads in front; it has been variously ascribed to the twelfth or fourteenth century; but no doubt is Jacobean, belonging to the same class of chairs as those enumerated in the following paragraph (114).* At Stanford Bishop church, Hereford, is a rude chair or settle, of oak without nails. It is said to have been traditionally called "Old Horstin's chair," and therefore has been supposed, very improbably, to be the identical chair seated on



Wells

Wells

which St Augustine received the British bishops in Herefordshire *c.* 600 A.D., greatly exciting the ire of the irascible Celts by not rising from his seat to receive them. In the Canterbury Museum Dr Cox has recently deposited a mediæval chair believed to be of great antiquity.†

A few examples remain of what are supposed to have been abbots' chairs. In the Bishop's Palace at Wells is preserved a chair of remarkable type, said to have been used by the Abbot

* Measured drawings of the Hereford chair by Mr W. H. Brierley appeared in the *British Architect*, xxiii. 114.

† Described by Dr Cox in *English Church Furniture*, p. 250.

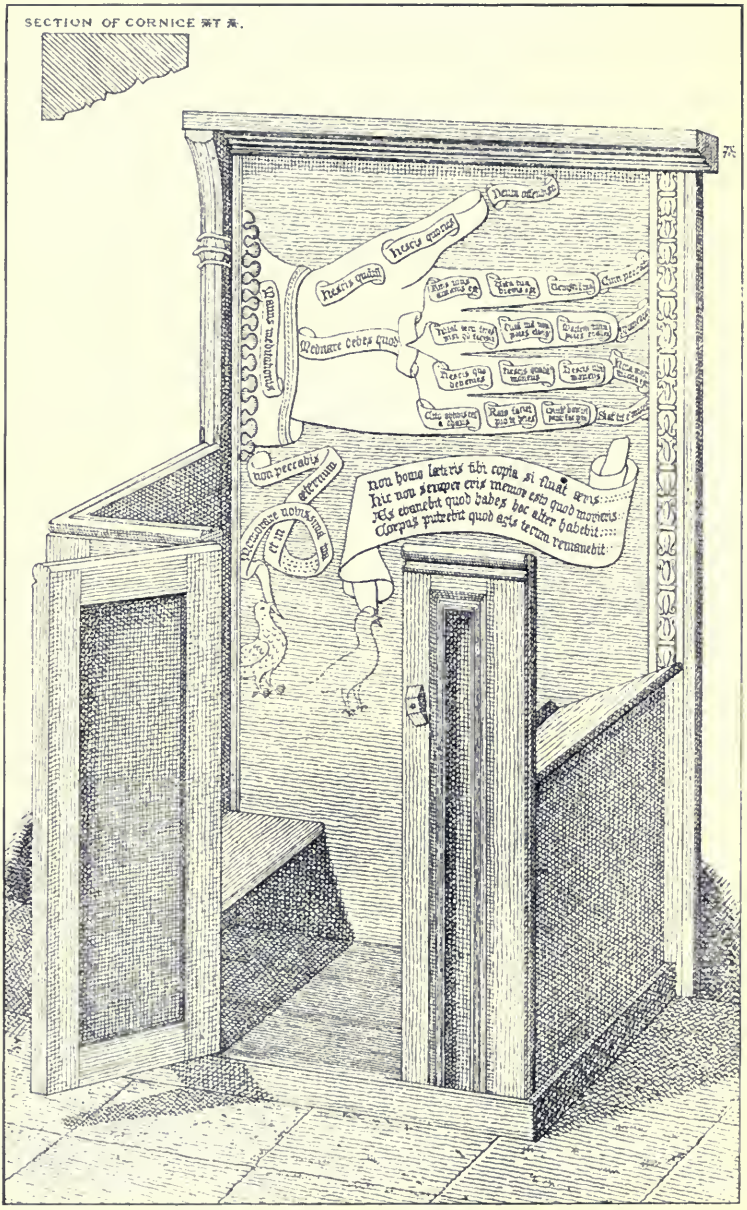
of Glastonbury. In the College, Manchester, is or was an ancient chair of the same baluster shape; and a very similar one formerly was to be seen in Agecroft Hall, Manchester. In the cottage at Zaandam, Holland, is a baluster chair, formerly used by Peter the Great. Another chair of this type, but of simpler form, is that once used by John Bunyan, and now preserved, together with his pulpit, in the meeting house of the Independent Congregation at Bedford. In the Victoria and Albert Museum is an arm-chair with balusters of turned ash. All these chairs are of seventeenth century date; no abbot of Glastonbury can have sat in the chair in the Bishop's Palace at Wells (115, on the left).

Dunmow

Winchfield

A chair from Glastonbury, bearing an inscription, and in date *c.* 1530, is now in the chapel of the Bishop's Palace at Wells; modern copies of it may be seen in hundreds of churches. It is inscribed *Monachus Glastonie* and *Johannes Arthurus;* a similar chair was formerly in Southwick Priory, Hampshire (115). An abbot's chair, reputed to have belonged originally to Peterborough cathedral, stands in the south chapel of Connington church, Hunts, where it is said to have been brought from the collegiate church of Fotheringhay, and is said to have been the last chair in which Mary, Queen of Scots, sat previous to her execution. From Little Dunmow priory came the chair now in Great Dunmow church, Essex; its trefoiled arcading shews that it was made in the thirteenth century. In it, up to 1907, were chaired the

Coventry



Bishop's Cannings

married couple "who had not repented them, sleeping or waking, of their marriage in a year and a day." The first recorded claim for the happy-marriage prize was made at the Priory in 1445 (116).

A magnificent and well-preserved seat is to be seen in St Mary's Hall, Coventry, and is assigned to the middle of the fifteenth century: it is of oak. From the mortices at one end and the discontinuance of the lower pattern it would seem to

Jarrow

Beeston Regis

have been attached to a set of stalls, and to have belonged therefore originally to some church or chapel (117).*

In Bishop's Cannings church, Wiltshire, is a remarkable seat believed to be a "carrel," or desk and seat, such as used to be employed by monks when at study in their cloister; it may have been brought from some monastic house. "It consists of an upright panel, with some fifteenth century moldings at the

* Shaw's *Ancient Furniture*, 31.

top and sides; against this panel is constructed a seat, facing sideways, with a flooring, a back the ordinary height of a pew, a door facing the panel, and a sloping desk facing the seat." With this description may be compared that of the monastic carrels given in the *Rites of Durham;*

"In the north side of the cloister from the Corner over against the Church Door to the corner over against the Dorter door was all finely glazed from the height to the sole within a little of the ground into the cloister garth, and in every window three pews or carrels where every one of the old monks had his Carrel, several by himself, that when they had dined they did resort to that place of cloister, and there studied upon their books, every one in his carrel, all the afternoon unto evensong time; this was their exercise every day. All their pews or Carrels was all finely wainscotted and very close, all but the forepart, which had carved work that gave light in at the carrel doors of wain scot. And in every Carrel was a desk to lie their books on; and the Carrels was no greater than from one stanchion of the window to another."

Lutterworth

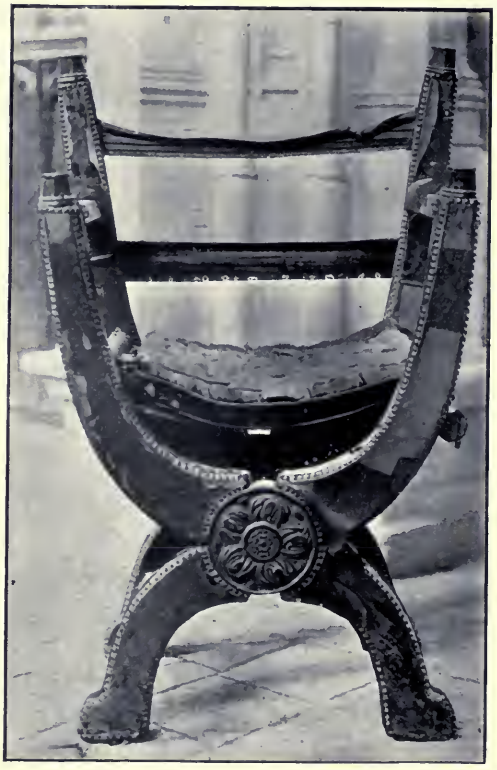
On the inner side of the large panel are a variety of brief admonitory sentences, painted in Latin black letter on the thumb and four fingers of a rudely outlined hand, inscribed at the cuff *Manus meditationis;* beginning on the thumb with *Nescis quantum, Nescis quoties, Deum offendisit.* Below the hand with its pious sentences on the respective points of each finger, two cocks are painted, the one white and the other black; from their beaks proceed two labels, bearing further ejaculations (118).*

In St Paul's church, Jarrow, is a very rude seat known as the chair of the Venerable Bede; he was a monk of Jarrow, and died in 742; only the sides and seat and the crossbar at the top are original. Mr Mickethwaite was of opinion that it was originally a settle; and it seems hardly likely that the chair can have survived from the eighth century, especially as the

* *Wiltshire Archæological Society's Magazine*, vi. 147-149, quoted in *English Church Furniture*, 253.

Westminster Abbey

monastery of Jarrow was repeatedly burnt by the Danes; but it is of an exceptionally hard oak, and bears marks of fire, and has had its present designation for several centuries.* It will be noticed that the standards have been whittled away by relic hunters (119). At Lutterworth is a well-known chair; the tradition is that it was used by John Wyclif, and that he was smitten with paralysis while sitting in it hearing mass, on Holy Innocents'



Winchester Cathedral

day, 1384, and was carried in it to the rectory hard by, where he died on the last day of that year. A brass plate on it records the tradition; but the chair is plainly Jacobean and of domestic origin; there is another chair in the chancel of exactly the same shape and pattern (120). At Kidderminster Baxter's

* *Archæologia Æliana*, xvii. 47, and *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries*, xvii. 238. There are four similar chairs at Kilpeck.

Higher Peover

Mainwaring Chapel

chair is preserved; on it is the following inscription:—"Rev. R[d] Baxter born n[r] Shrewsbury in 1615 and died at London in 1691. Chaplain to King Charles II. Rev. T. Doolittle, M.A. S[r] H. Ashurst B[t], Kidderminster, A. 1650 D." Baxter speaks of Mr Thomas Doolittle, born in Kidderminster, as "a good schollar, a godly man, of an upright life and moderate Principles, and a very profitable serious Preacher." To Sir Henry Ashurst, Bart., Sylvester dedicated his *Reliquiae Baxterianae*, 1696. He also stood by Baxter in the day of his trial and distress, paid the fees for his six counsel, and when the trial before Judge Jeffries was over, led Baxter through the crowd, and conveyed him away in his coach. He was also Baxter's executor, and it is possible the chair may originally have belonged to him. At Beeston Regis, Norfolk, is a fine old seat, now used by the parish clerk (119); it would seem to be of the period of the work at Balsham and elsewhere (3). At Winchfield, Hampshire, is another old seat of rude and early design (116).

Puddletown

Stone seats are occasionally found. Where they are placed south of the altar, they are probably sedilia; but not when they are placed in the western bay or bays of the chancel or in the nave. At Barnack the remains of a stone seat were found on the west wall of the Pre-Conquest tower; it had formerly an oak seat and oak slabs on either side: a stone seat occurs also in the west wall of the nave of Old Radnor church. A stone seat is not uncommon in the western bays on the south side of chancels; the object of this is not clear; perhaps it was to provide a seat for the priest while reading his office; in later days, as we have seen, oak stalls were common in parish chancels, and the priest would read his office in one of these. Several examples occur. There is a rude example in the Pre-Conquest church of Corhampton, Hampshire. Others, probably

of thirteenth century date, occur at Warlingham, Surrey, and Halsham and Sprotborough, Yorkshire. At Lenham, Kent, is one with solid stone arms, and with a cinquefoiled canopy of later date.

Last, we have the Coronation chair at Westminster,* which has a long, if somewhat unreliable history behind it. The stone beneath it is said to have been the one on which Jacob's head rested at Bethel; from whence it travelled to Egypt, and thence to Spain, Ireland and lastly Scotland. King Kenneth of Scotland had the following inscription engraved on it in Latin verse:—

"Ni fallat fatum, Scoti quocunque locatum
Invenient lapidem regnare tenentur ibidem";

Redenhall

Redenhall

a prophecy curiously fulfilled on the accession of James I. to the English throne (121). On the upper surface of the stone is a rectangular groove large enough to receive an inscribed plate. Edward I. found the stone in 1296 at Scone abbey, where the Scotch kings had always been crowned on it. He carried it to London, and in 1300 Master Adam, the king's goldsmith, was working at a bronze chair to hold it. But when this was nearly

* For descriptions and illustrations see Mr J. Hunter's "Edward the First's Spoliations in Scotland, A.D. 1296" in *Arch. Journal*, vol. xiii.; Mr W. Burges' paper in "Gleanings from Westminster Abbey," p. 121; and Mr Lethaby's *Westminster*, pp. 18, 265, 297.

finished, the king altered his mind and had a copy of it made in wood—the present chair—which cost 100s., by Master Walter, the king's painter. The chair has lost the quatrefoils in front, and the lions are of recent date. It originally stood in the same position as a bishop's chair, *i.e.*, at the back of the High altar and in front of the shrine of Edward the Confessor, and facing to the west. It is made of oak, fastened together with pins; the surface was first covered over with the usual gesso; then gold was applied by means of white of egg, and burnished; then minute dots, forming diapers of foliage, beasts, birds, &c., were pricked on the surface of the gold, taking care not to penetrate it, with a blunt instrument before the ground and gilding had lost their elasticity; a most tedious and delicate process. A second chair, modelled on the older one, was made on her coronation for Mary II., Queen of William III. It used to stand by the side of the king's chair, but has been moved to the easternmost recess of Henry VII.'s chapel. In Winchester cathedral is the chair which was used by Mary I. on her marriage with Philip of Spain, which was solemnised in the Lady chapel: it is now placed in Bishop Langton's chapel (122). Very similar is a chair preserved in York Minster, which, owing to the shield attached in front, is probably not older than the time of Richard II.:* the cushion is stuffed, and covered with green velvet; the shield also is covered with leather, the upper part of which has been torn away, and the lines upon it are but slightly stamped. At Constance is shewn a similar chair of Martin V., who was elected Pope there in 1417.

Much Hadham

In addition to the above, chairs are often placed in the

* Henry Shaw's *Ancient Furniture*, Plate VI.

presbytery to the north of the altar. These were occupied by the preacher during morning or evening service, till his turn came to ascend the pulpit and deliver the sermon. Of these the greater number no doubt have been presented by the owner of some manor house or parsonage, or have been picked up in recent years in some second-hand furniture shop. This is probably

Cartmel

the case with the interesting chair which is known to have been for nearly a century in the Mainwaring chapel of Higher Peover church, Cheshire; it bears not only the name, but the portrait and initials of the owner. The inscription is DORATHY MAYNWARING; she married Sir Richard Mainwaring of Ightfield, Salop, High Sheriff of that county in 1545. Most of the chair

is older than her time; Dorothy seems to have had it put together of old bits of carving, adding her name and portrait, and the raven, the crest of her father, Sir Robert Corbet. She lived at Ightfield, and it was probably when that branch of the family became extinct that the chair was brought to Higher Peover church, and placed in the Mainwaring chapel. At the top are holes for holding sconces in which tapers would be placed (123). At Penshurst there used to be a chair with a bust on the inner panel of the back; the tradition was that it belonged to Sir Philip Sidney.* At Puddletown, Dorset, a chair has

Suffolk

Halsall

been in the chancel for very many years; it is of Elizabethan date, and was probably brought from some hall or manor house. "The tall narrow back, the broadening seat, the vertically straight, but horizontally angled arms are those of the French caqueteure type rarely seen in England. The strap carving of the back is of the best; while the twin greyhounds with averted heads that fit the curved top of the chair no doubt have reference to the original owner" (124).† At Upton, near Castor, there

* Illustrated in Hone's *Year Book*, 143.

† Rev. Arthur Helps from *Country Life*, 12th March 1910.

are two chairs in the chancel; on one of which is inscribed "A.D. 1700—Joane Browne—Want Not." The other has the initials J. D.; the Doves were Lords of the Manor at that time (130).* In Redenhall church, Norfolk, is one of two chairs brought there from Canterbury cathedral by Archbishop Sancroft on his expulsion from the see in 1615; it is of a curious pattern common in the latter part of the seventeenth century, in which the back is hinged and can be turned over to convert the chair into a table. Archbishop Sancroft is buried at Redenhall, which, by the way, possesses perhaps the finest church tower of any village in England and an exceptionally fine ring of ancient bells. The other chair is kept at Gawdy Hall, the seat of the Sancrofts (125).

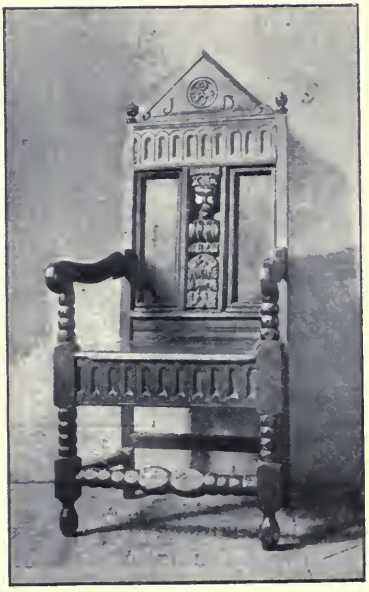
Combmartin

In many cases the chair is a composite product, made up of fragments of screens, bench ends and the like; this seems to be the case with the chairs in the churches of Bridford, Devon, and Othery, Somerset; that at Much Hadham, Hertfordshire, appears to be put together out of the fragments of a screen (126). In the Chapter House of Gloucester cathedral are two chairs, on the inner panels of the back of which are carved "The Last Supper" and "The Ascension" respectively; the panels were presented in the time of Dean Law, and, provided with a framework, now form part of two chairs.

Where, however, the chair has a representation of some ecclesiastical subject, the presumption is that it was made for the church in which it is placed. In Cartmel Priory church is a fine chair on the back of which is represented the Resurrection; below are seen the Roman soldiers; above, Christ shews the wounds in His hands (127). At Sanderstead, Surrey, Abraham

* Communicated by Rev. R. M. Serjeantson

with uplifted sword is about to slay Isaac ; on the right is shewn the ram, on the left an angel. The same subject appears, better carved, on the back of one of two chairs brought from a church in Suffolk, now pulled down ; on the other chair is a representation of what looks like the Temptation (128). In Halsall church, Lancashire, are two beautiful chairs with the initials IHS ; beneath them is a scroll on which is inscribed *Ecce quomodo amabat* (128). In the Victoria and Albert Museum is a similar "winged" chair, which bears the initials IPI and the date 1670. In the chancel of Combmartin church, Devon, is a mahogany chair with wheat and grapes, apparently referring to the sacramental bread and wine ; it had been for many years in the family of the present incumbent, Rev. F. W. Jones, and was presented by him to the church ; it is possible that it was originally made for a church (129).



Upton

Henry the Seventh's Chapel, Westminster

INDEX TO PLACES AND ILLUSTRATIONS

Numbers followed by the name of the Photographer or the Draughtsman refer to Illustrations

ABERDEEN, King's College, 29, 68
Abergavenny Priory, Monmouth, 46, G. G. Buckley. 29, 40, 47
Amiens, 11
Aquileia, 101
Avignon, 104, F. Bond. 104

BALSHAM, Cambs., 3, G. G. Buckley. 1, 5, 100, 124
Barnack, Northants, 124
Basing, Hants, 79
Bedford, 116
Beeston Regis, Norfolk, 119, C. F. Nunneley. 124
Belgium, 29, 31
Beverley Minster, Yorks., 3, 14, 14; C. Goulding. 7, Alan Potter. 27, 63, 64, and frontispiece; W. E. Wigfall. 64, 65, 106; F. H. Crossley. 5, 7, 26, 29, 40, 51, 65, 66, 68, 74, 106
Beverley St Mary, 2, F. H. Crossley. 1, 5
Bishop Auckland, Durham, 31, 67
Bishop Cannings, Wilts., 118, Wilts. Archæological Society. 119
Blythburgh, Suffolk, 11, S. Gardner. 7
Bologna, St Stefano, 101
Bossal, Yorks., 92
Boston, Lincs., 86, 95
Brancepeth, Durham, 93, F. Bond. 31, 67, 100
Braunton, Devon, 96
Brescia, Sta. Maria dei Miracoli, 82
Bristol Cathedral, 29, 50. St Nicholas, 97
Bruges, 68, 70
Burlingham St Edmund, Norfolk, 85

CAMBRIDGE, Great St Mary, 97. King's College Chapel, 78, F. R. Taylor. 5, 29, 75, 77, 79, 82
Canterbury Cathedral, 105, S. Gardner. 23, 31, 36, 53, 84, 104, 115
Carlisle Cathedral, 21, R. Billings. 59, F. Bond. 23, 29, 51, 58, 61, 66, 68, 70, 82, 106
Cartmel, Lancashire, 80, 81, 127; F. H. Crossley. 5, 31, 75, 79, 129
Chaddesden, Derbyshire, 99, G. H. Widdows. 12, 100
Chelsea, 94, 98
Chester Cathedral, 9, W. M. Dodson. 10, 24, 53, 55, 56; F. H. Crossley. 5, 6, 7, 10, 12, 23, 26, 29, 51, 54, 58, 61, 66, 68, 70
Chichester Cathedral, 36, P. M. Johnston. 5, 26, 29, 36, 38, 47, 100
Christchurch, Hants, 2, G. F. Gillham. 76, 77; F. H. Crossley. 1, 5, 29, 75, 77, 79, 82, 105
Cockersand Abbey, Lancs., 43
Combmartin, Devon, 129, W. M. Dodson. 130
Connington, Hunts., 116
Constance, 126
Constantinople, Santa Sophia, 111
Corhampton, Hants, 124
Coventry, St Mary's Hall, 117, Anon. 119
Cyprus, 104

DALMATIA, 16, 101
Dinant, 31
Dunblane, Scotland, 67, W. Maitland. 5, 29, 67
Dunis, Flanders, 68
Dunmow, Essex, 116, F. R. Taylor. 116

Durham Cathedral, 22, 107; R. Billings. 66, F. Bond. 15, 31, 51, 66, 68, 94, 110. Castle, 5

ELY Cathedral, 37, G. H. Tyndall. 13, 20, 29, 36, 37, 38, 40, 43, 47, 49, 51, 61, 66, 68, 91, 106
Etwall, Derbyshire, 13, G. H. Widdows. 8
Exeter, 102, E. K. Prideaux. 103, G. H. Widdows. 12, 15, 23, 107

FAVERSHAM, Kent, 97
Flanders, West, 68, 70
Fotheringhay, Northants, 116
France, 31, 67, 68, 92, 105
Fressingfield, Suffolk, 8

GAWDY Hall, Norfolk, 129
Gendron-Celles, 31
Glastonbury, Somerset, 115, 116
Gloucester Cathedral, 38, Oscar Clark. 23, 29, 33, 38, 40, 129
Grado, 101
Great Burstead, Essex, 94

HALIFAX, 89
Halsall, Lancashire, 128, G. G. Buckley. 130
Halsham, Yorkshire, 125
Hambleton, Worcester, 98, G. H. Poole. 100
Hampton Court, Middlesex, 75, 77
Hastières, 31
Hemingborough, Yorks., 87, C. de Gruchy. 33, 77, 88
Hereford Cathedral, 43, G. B. Atkinson. 114, A. J. Wilson. 13, 20, 26, 29, 40, 44, 108, 115. All Saints', 44, G. G. Buckley. 45, W. M. Dodson. 5, 29, 40, 47, 100. St Peter, 89, G. G. Buckley. 29, 49, 100
Hexham, Northumberland, 23, 29, 106
Higham Ferrers, Northants, 29
Higher Peover, Cheshire, 123, F. H. Crossley. 127
Huntingfield, Suffolk, 97

IFFLEY, Oxon., 86
Ightfield, Salop, 128
Ingham, Norfolk, 85
Istria, 16, 101
Ivychurch, Kent, 85

JARROW, Durham, 119, W. Maitland. 120

KIDDERMINSTER, 122
Kildwick, 90
Kilpeck, Herefordshire, 122
Kirkstall, Yorks., 20, 23

LACOCK, Wilts., 82
Lancaster, 39, 41, 42; F. H. Crossley. 29, 40, 54
Lapford, Devon, 77
Layer Marney, Essex, 75, 79
Lenham, Kent, 125
Lincoln Minster, 5, 52, 114; S. Smith. 17, Hugh M'Lachlan. 5, 10, 13, 23, 25, 26, 28, 29, 51, 54, 58, 59, 61, 66, 68, 91, 106, 113
Littlebourne, Kent, 86
London, 70, 79. Christ Church, Newgate Street, 4, F. R. Taylor. 5. Hampton Court, 75, 77. Rolls Chapel, 75. St Botolph, Aldgate, 94. St Mary-at-Hill, 88, 95, 96, 97, 100. St Paul's, 83, F. J. Hall. 28, 31, 82. Old St Paul's, 23. Victoria and Albert Museum, 104, 116, 130. See Westminster Abbey
Louth, Lincs., 75
Ludham, Norfolk, 85
Lutterworth, Leicester, 120, E. H. Day. 122

MANCHESTER Cathedral, 6, 62; F. H. Crossley. 5, 7, 29, 51, 61, 65, 66, 68, 70, 74. Agecroft Hall, 116. College, 116
Mantes, 93
Melrose, 68
Milan, St Ambrogio, 16
Much Hadham, Herts., 126, A. W. Anderson. 129

NANTWICH, Cheshire, 57, F. H. Crossley. 29, 51, 58, 59, 61, 68
Nevers, 105
Newark, 29
Norbury, Derbyshire, 86
North Cadbury, Somerset, 77
Norton, Suffolk, 85
Norwich, 48, S. Gardner. 13, 19, 25, 26, 29, 40, 43, 47, 104
Notre Dame de la Roche, 31
Nottingham, 90

OLD Radnor, Radnorshire, 124
Ossero, 101
Othery, Somerset, 129
Oulton, Suffolk, 86
Oxford, 29, 79

PARENZO, 101
Paris, Hotel Cluny, 111
Penshurst, Kent, 128
Peterborough, 32, H. Plowman. 15, 33, 116
Poitiers, 31
Puddletown, Dorset, 124, W. Wonnacott. 128

RATZBURG, 31
Ravenna, 113
Reading, St Giles', 97
Redenhall, Norfolk, 125, C. F. Nunneley. 129
Ripon Minster, 8, W. Maitland. 60, J. H. Bayley. 5, 6, 7, 15, 23, 26, 29, 51, 61, 65, 66, 68, 70, 93
Rochester Cathedral, 30, P. M. Johnston. 23, 29, 31
Rome, 16, 19, 23, 101, 105, 111. Baths of Caracalla, 101. S. Clemente, 19, 101. St John Lateran, 101, 111. S. Maria in Cosmedin, 19, 101. St Paul extra Muros, 19. St Peter's, 111. Old, 105. Sta. Pudentiana, 111
Rotherham, Yorks., 94
Rothwell, Northants, 90

ST ASAPH, 51, 61
St David's, 108, 109; W. M. Dodson. 15, 29, 50, 107, 110
St Gall, 20, 23
St Paul's, 83, F. J. Hall. 28, 31, 82
Salisbury, 92
Sall, Norfolk, 85, F. Bond. 85, 100
Sanderstead, Surrey, 129
Saulieu, 31
Scotland, 67, 68, 91
Sedgefield, Durham, 31, 67
Sees, St Martin, Normandy, 43
Sherborne, Dorset, 49, G. G. Buckley. 29, 49
Sherburn Hospital, Durham, 31, 67
Sion Abbey, Middlesex, 43
Sluys, 70
Snettisham, Norfolk, 40
Southampton, 79
Southwell, Notts., 25, 26, 50
Southwick Priory, Hants, 116
Sprotborough, Yorks., 125
Stanford Bishop, Herefordshire, 115
Stirling, 68
Stowlangtoft, Suffolk, 91, C. F. Nunneley. 5, 7, 29, 49, 85, 100
Suffolk, 128, J. C. Stenning. 49, 85, 130
Sutton Coldfield, Warwickshire, 84
Swine, Yorks., 77

TALLAND, Cornwall, 77
Theydon Gardon, Essex, 92
Trau, 101
Trunch, Norfolk, 85, F. Bond. 5, 85, 100

UPTON, Northants, 130, G. C. Druce. 128

VAISON, Provence, 101
Venice, St Mark's, 16. Sta. Maria dei Miracoli, 82

WALPOLE St Peter, Norfolk, 12, S. Gardner. 7
Warlingham, Surrey, 125
Wells Cathedral, 115, G. W. Saunders. 7, 11, 13, 20, 26, 28, 29, 110. Bishop's Palace, 115, 116
Westminster Abbey, 31, Sandford. 121, A. Gardner. 21, 23, 25, 29, 31, 33, 51, 77, 125, 73; Henry VII.'s Chapel, A. W. Pugin, 73; D. Weller, 131. 10, 25, 70, 74, 75.
Weston in Gordano, Somerset, 85
Winchelsea, Sussex, 36
Winchester Cathedral, 34, 122; C. E. S. Beloe. 35, S. Gardner. 72, J. F. Hamilton. 73, J. Britton. 5, 13, 23, 29, 33, 40, 43, 72, 75, 79, 126. St Cross, 75, 105
Winchfield, Hants, 116, G. C. Druce. 124
Windsor, St George's Chapel, 60, Lysons' *Magna Britannia*. 71, Alan Potter. 12, 29, 51, 70
Wingfield, Suffolk, 46, C. F. Nunneley. 29, 47
Worcester, 23, 84, 91

YATTON, Somerset, 92
York Minster, 18, 58; J. Britton. 23, 58. 126. St Maurice, 88. St Michael Belfry, 92

ZARA, 101
Zaandam, Holland, 116

INDEX RERUM

ABBOT, place in choir, 13, 106
Accounts (*see also* Cost), 95
Arcading, 40, 54, 100
Arms and armour, 36, 48, 54 (*see also* Heraldry)
Arrangements of stalls, 12, 16, 26

BACK of Stalls, 5, 10, 15, 26, 28 (*see* Panelling)
Badges, 47
Baluster chairs, 115, 116
Bath, order of the, 74
Battlements, 36, 38, 47, 51, 54, 61
Baxter's chair, 124
Benches, 49, 99
Benefactors, 92
Bishop's chair, 13, 19
— throne, 101
Black Death, 40, 47, 58, 110
Boys, 96 (*see* "Children of the Choir")
Brattishing, 47, 63
Busts, 70, 77
Buttresses, 54

CANONS, resident and non-resident, 11, 25, 28
Canopies, construction of, 1, 10, 33, 54
— ogee, 10, 33, 36, 43, 45, 47, 50, 53, 54, 59, 65, 68
— bowing ogee, 10, 38, 45, 47, 51
— compound ogee, 54
— "Lincoln" ogee, 54
— tiers or stories of, 38
— varieties of, 1, 29, 51, 74, 100
Capitals, 10, 61, 82
Capping, 10
Carrel, 119
Carvers, 68, 70, 74, 77
Carving, 5, 33, 38, 53, 54, 61, 68, 70, 77, 79, 82, 108
Centaurs, 68
Chairs, abbots', 115
— bishops', 13, 111
Chairs, church, 111
— marble, 101
— popes', 111
— stone, 101, 124
— winged, 130
Chancels, 16, 20
— enlargement of, 86
Chantries and Chantry priests, 8
"Children of the Choir," 25, 96
Choir, 13, 16, 20
Choristers, 1, 25, 26, 85, 95
Chronological order of stalls, 29
Churchwardens' accounts, 95 (*see* Cost)
Classical design, 67, 79
Clerk, parish, 97, 124
Construction of stalls and canopies, 1, 8, 10, 33, 54 (*see also* Canopies)
Cornice, 1, 40, 47, 49, 50, 63, 100
Coronation chair, 125
Cost, 11, 79, 84, 88, 107
Costume, 36
Cresting, 29, 36, 45, 65, 72, 79
Crockets, 10, 33, 44, 47, 51
Crossing, 20, 23
Crypts, 23
Cusps, 33, 36, 43, 47, 49, 61

DAGOBERT, chair of, 111
Dates of stalls, 5, 29
Dean's stall, 13, 50, 54
Design, 10, 38, 68, 70, 74
Desks, 1, 5, 7, 47, 88, 100, 119
Dorothy Mainwaring, 79, 127
Dove, 95, 129
— of St Botolph's, Aldgate, 95
— of Upton, 129
Dutch carvers, 70

EDMUND Crouchback, 33
Edmund, Saint, 7
Elbows of stalls, 1, 5, 10, 77
Ends of stalls, 5, 8
Entablature, 79, 82
Epistle, place of reading, 13

FINIALS, 33, 51
Flamboyant, 40
Flemish work, 68, 70
Fleur de lis, 68
Flying buttresses, 10, 54
Foreign design and workmen, 68, 77, 79, 82
Frithstols, 106

GABLES, 10, 33, 54, 61, 65 (*see* Canopies)
Galleries, 29
Garter, Knights of Order of, 72
Gilds, 8, 95
Glastonbury chairs, 116
Gospel, desks, and place of reading, 13
Grinling Gibbons, 84

HAWKS, 47
Heraldry, 5, 6, 47, 48, 50, 79
Hipknobs, 10
Honeycomb, 77
Honour, place of, 13

INSCRIPTIONS, 26, 28, 82
Italian workers, 77, 79, 82

JACOBEAN chairs, 115, 122

KEMP, Archbishop, 53
Knights of the Bath, 74
Knights of the Garter, 72

LAITY, 1, 16, 19, 90
"Lincoln ogee," 54

MAINWARING, Dorothy, 79, 127
Marble chairs, 101, 106
Masks, 5, 44
Mayor's stall, 6, 15, 82, 94
Maximian, chair of, 113
Minstrels, 99
Misericords, 1, 48, 50, 53, 54, 61, 65, 74, 75
Mouldings, 40
More, Sir Thomas, 94, 98
Music in churches, 95

NICHES, 10, 38, 51, 54, 58, 59, 61, 63, 65
Nobility in chancel, 91
North side, 13, 15
Number of stalls, 25, 26, 50, 75

OAK, 68
Occupants of stalls, 1, 88
Ogee, 10, 33, 36, 43, 45, 47, 51, 53, 54, 59, 65, 68
Orientation, 16, 105
Organs and Organists, 96, 98

PANELLING, 5, 50, 68, 74, 100
Parish churches, planning, growth of, 16, 23, 25, 85, 86 (*see* Chancel)
— stalls in, 49, 85
Parish clerk, 97, 124
Passion, emblems of, 82
Patrons, in chancels, 91
Pediment, 33, 43, 51
Pews in chancels, 95
Pinnacles, 10, 38, 51, 53, 54, 58, 59, 61, 66, 74, 108
Place of honour, 13
Planning, 16, 20, 23, 25, 85
Plinth, 100
Poppyheads, 6, 7
Portrait busts, 77
— panels, 75
Position of stalls, 1, 16
Prebendaries, 25, 28
Processions, 13, 25, 92
Projection of canopies, 47
Psalter, recitation of, 26, 28
Purbeck marble, 105

REMOVALS from other churches, 43
Renaissance, 66, 75
Restorers and restorations, 20, 29, 38, 84
Return stalls, 12, 13, 25, 100, 106
Rochets, 97
Rood loft, 95, 98
Rows of stalls, 25

SANCROFT, Archbishop, 129
Screens, 10, 12, 19, 20, 50, 75, 79, 100
Scrollwork, 5, 82
Seats, 1, 10, 48, 77
marble and stone, 111, 124
Sedilia, 124
Sella curulis and gestatoria, 101, 111
Shafts, 10, 33, 51, 59, 77, 82
Shields, 5, 6
Shoulders of stalls, 1, 5, 59
Singers, 1, 10, 95 (*see also* Boys, "Children of the Choir," Choristers)

South side, 13, 15
Spires and spirelets, 1, 11, 38, 40, 49, 51, 53, 54, 58, 61, 63, 66, 72, 106
Stalls in greater churches, 1, 13
— in parish churches, 49, 85, 90
— object of, 85
Stall-wages, 26
— work, earliest, 31
— thirteenth century, 31, 88, 90
— fourteenth century, 33, 50, 51, 53, 58
— fifteenth century, 48, 50
— sixteenth century, 79
— Renaissance, 66, 75
— eighteenth century, 84
Standards, 8
Stanley legend, 61
Statues, 10, 51, 61
Stone chairs and seats, 101, 124
— *versus* wood, 51
Stories of stalls, one, 38, 43, 44, 51, 59, 72, 74
— two, 10, 38, 47, 51, 53, 58, 61, 65, 72
String-course, 58, 59, 61, 65, 66
Sudbury hutch, 75
Sunday and other processions, 25, 92
Supermullions, 40, 47
Supports, 5, 77
Surplices, 89, 96

TABERNACLED spires and canopies, 1, 10, 51, 53, 66, 106
Tester, coved, 47, 63
Thirteenth century work, 31, 88, 90, 116, 125
Thistle, Scottish, 68
Three-gabled canopies, 38, 51, 54, 59
Throne, bishop's, 13, 16, 19, 101, 105
Tiers of canopies, 38
Tracery, 33, 36, 40, 43, 45, 51, 54, 58, 59, 61, 63, 65, 68, 82

VICARS choral, 26
Ventilation, 100
Vine, 68

WINGED chairs, 130
Women in stalls, 92
Wood *versus* stone, 51
Workmanship, 100
Wyche, Lady, 94
Wiclif, 122

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